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A TREATISE

ON THE

PECULIARITIES OF THE BIBLE;

BEING AN

EXPOSITION OF THE PRINCIPLES

INVOLVED IN SOME OF THE MOST

REMARKABLE FACTS AND PHENOMENA RECORDED

IN REVELATION.

BY THE

REV. E. D. RENDELL,

AUTHOR OF "ANTEDILUVIAN HISTORY," "DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST," ETC.

"Scripture, to be believed true with a full conviction, must be at one—consonant—with reason: let it, therefore, be treated rationally. By taking this course we shall not lose strength; but we shall gain a strength which no church ever had."—*Hippolytus and his Age*. By CHRISTIAN CHARLES JOSIAS BUNSEN, D. C. L.

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PREFACE.

EVERY one, whose attention has been directed to the condition of Christendom, must have observed that the several Churches into which it has been divided, have become exceedingly unsettled; and, also, that much worldliness of purpose, with a considerable amount of naturalism in sentiment, have been developed among them. The efforts which underlie the agitations of some, arise out of a desire to be "greatest;" and the naturalism, which is found to be present in others, is consequent on long inattention to the true spirituality of the Scriptures. The letter has been studied with care, but its spiritual significance has been overlooked. Faith has been considered as the essential genius of Christianity, notwithstanding the apostle assures us, that charity is the greatest, (1 Cor. xiii. 13,) and we think there cannot be any reasonable doubt, that the difficulties by which the Churches are disturbed, originate in some misapprehension of the religion, which the Bible has been provided to inculcate. Many of the sincere, who are within the pale of the Churches, are impressed with this opinion; and the sceptic looks upon the disagreements of Christians, as affording him an argument to sustain his disbelief in Revelation.

Under these circumstances, it becomes a matter of serious inquiry, whether some higher view of the Scriptures, than that which is usually taken of them, may not be employed to encourage the pious, in their hope for the removal of the difficulties which have surrounded popular Christianity; and to show to the sceptic that he has no just ground for his exultation. We think this may be satisfactorily done. We have long and anxiously looked for a solution of this question, and we are more and more convinced, that the causes of the present unsatisfactory state of Christendom are traceable to an imperfect estimate of the Scriptures, and to the unconstructive character of several of the leading doctrines, which have been professedly deduced from them. That estimate, and those doctrines, have had a mission to perform to a state of society that is now passing away; a new condition of desire and intellect is in the process of being developed, which that mission cannot supply. This condition is superior in general education to its predecessor, and much higher in its aspirations; and views of the Scriptures and their teachings will have to be taken, which are commensurate with its requirements, in order to maintain a rational credibility in their divine origin.

It seems plain that the Church is in a transition state; and it is

reasonable to believe that the difficulties, which it is now in the process of experiencing, are the prelude to some higher enjoyments. Affliction worketh for us a weight of glory. (2 Cor. iv. 17.) A red sky in the evening indicates the coming of fair weather. (Matt. xvi. 2.) Those enjoyments may not be readily embraced; and greater tribulations in the Church, than any which this age has witnessed, may have to be endured, before much of their benefits will be generally recognized. Errors and prejudices, which time has hallowed, will not permit themselves to be set aside without a struggle; nevertheless, darkness will be dispersed before the rising sun.

The doctrines which contented the past, do not so fully satisfy the present generation. The haze of mystery is not so deeply revered. Reason demands a sight of that, which faith is required to acknowledge. The dicta of the ecclesiastic are no longer implicitly believed; they are queried and canvassed, not so much with a leaning to doubt, as with a view to knowledge. Men begin to feel that they ought to comprehend the teachings of religion themselves, and not merely acquiesce in the supposed understanding of them by others; and the result, in many minds, has been the discovery, that what has been taught respecting the Scriptures and their contents, is neither so sensible nor so convincing as it was once considered. It is seen that the Christianity of the past has possessed a series of human elements, which cannot be perpetuated in the Church of the future. The class of persons who have come to this conclusion is annually increasing; and we have no hesitation to confess ourselves to be among them. They do not exist merely as a people, who have separated themselves from popular Christianity, but they are to be found in all sections of the Church, among the clergy as well as among the laity. It is true that they do not create any great bustle in society: it is not their genius: they are aware that all solid and permanent changes of thought are not of rapid growth. The gourd of Jonah, which *grew up* in a night, had a worm in it, which caused it to *perish* in a night. (Jonah iv. 10.) It is empiricism which employs a flourish of trumpets to announce its being. Truth makes its way in sober quietude. The sun rises in silence; and, although the poets have intimated that he sheds abroad his light to the music of the spheres, yet, by that, they only mean to inform us of the harmonies of creation, which his brilliancy unfolds. When Christianity was planted in Judea, its Divine Founder, though "the true light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world," (John i. 9), excited, at first, but little attention; and that from the great ones of the earth, was rather in the way of scorn than love. A candle can burn but dimly in a corrupted atmosphere; the flame

goes out in carbonic acid : this, happily, is not the air of society as it now exists ; a light kindled in it, will not be extinguished by it. We believe the apostle's maxim, that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," (Gal. v. 9), and we look upon the fermentation which religious society is now in the process of undergoing, as conducive to some purifying results. It will tend to disperse much that is uncongenial to its intellectual quiet, and so prepare the way for the better appreciation of those spiritual truths which the Scriptures contain, and for the communication of which they were mainly written.

The following work is intended as an humble contribution towards the means, by which those purposes are to be effected. The subjects of which it treats are full of interest to religious minds, and the settlement of them, to the satisfaction of intellectual judgment, would be of great advantage to the Church. The aspect in which we have presented them, will, we think, be useful in that direction. We are certain, that aspect has not been so generally considered as its importance deserves. It is new to the great bulk of society, though not original with us ; we feel assured, however, that publicity will gain for it a more extensive appreciation than it at present commands. We believe, therefore have we spoken.

Many portions of the work have formed public discourses, which several judicious friends, in various parts of the kingdom, have desired to see in print. We have also been informed that the matter of those discourses has been useful in directing the attention of strangers to higher views of the Word than they had previously entertained ; also, that it has been a means of arresting the minds of some in their progress towards scepticism ; and likewise an instrument for strengthening the belief of others in the divine origination and spiritual character of the Scriptures.

Encouraged by the considerations afforded through these facts, we undertook the writing of the present volume, and we hope the publication will be a means of greater usefulness to the cause of spiritual Christianity. A large amount of matter has been added to the discourses, to which we have given no previous publicity, and they have been entirely rewritten ; so that the whole may be considered as a new work, in which very little of the sermonizing character is preserved. A great number of notes have been inserted, which are intended to illustrate, authorize, or throw some additional light on the subjects to which they are appended, but which could not well have been introduced in the text, without interrupting the argument, and thus weakening its force.

We have called the work *A Treatise on the Peculiarities of the*

Bible, &c., because the composition of that Holy Book, the facts of spiritual life and sentiment which it reveals, the events and phenomena which it relates, the duties which it inculcates, and the hopes which it inspires, are all *Peculiarities*; they belong to no other book as its own; all man's information respecting them comes from thence; and they all involve the knowledge of peculiar treasures for the Church. Some of the most interesting and prominent of them have been selected for explanation. We have not, knowingly, shunned any difficulties connected with them, though we may not have succeeded in the removal of all those which have come before us. The elucidations of the subjects which are handled, are offered as studious sketches, but they have no pretensions to finished drawings. No embellishments of style have been attempted. A clear and perspicuous expression of our meaning is what has been aimed at. Although we love ornament, in general, we thought our work was one in which simplicity might be usefully preferred.

The general idea, which presided over the arrangement of the work, is as follows. It is argued, that man is a being, whose intelligence in religion, as in all other things, is progressive; and that, as the first principle of all religion is to believe in God, so the knowledge necessary to the formation of that faith, was originally communicated to man from God; — that man is adapted to receive such information, by virtue of the soul with which he is endowed; — that such a revelation prevailed in the earliest ages of man's innocence and integrity, but, that as he progressively fell into external states, an external revelation was provided, which should be adapted to the requirements of that condition. Inquiry is then instituted as to the literal structure of that revelation, and an explanation attempted of its nature, and of some of the most remarkable phenomena which it relates; the drift of the whole being not only to keep before man the spirituality of his own being, and to point out to him that there is another life beyond the grave, but to indicate some interesting particulars respecting them. If the reader will remember this general idea of the work, he will be enabled to see, notwithstanding the apparent distinctness of every chapter, that each is connected with the others; and that the whole were required to complete our design in the preparation of the work.

To this we will only add, that the writing of the work has been a labor of love, and that we have no anxiety about its results. We have intended, by its publication, to serve the cause of the Lord's Church; and if, by the blessings of the Divine Providence, it is in any manner successful in that direction, we shall not be without our reward.

PRESTON, *January 4, 1853.*

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PECULIARITIES OF THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE REASONABLENESS OF EXPECTING AN IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND A CLEARER PERCEPTION OF THE RELIGION WHICH THEY INCUPLICATE.

ARGUMENT. The sense in which "there is nothing new" is to be understood. Revelation intended to bring about a new state. Neither the Scriptures nor Creation exhibit upon their surface, all that they possess. Commentaries constructed on the idea of evolving new information. Doctrinal inferences not infallible, because of human origin. Disputes respecting them. The truths already known, progressively introduced; so were the documents in which they are contained. Disagreements respecting their interpretations. The Eastern and Western Churches, together with those of the Reformation, brought about by degrees. Christianity not yet complete in its results. A further development to be expected. The disorganization of the Christian world. The causes mentioned, and some consequences stated. Christianity a system of luminous truths. Some of the sources of scepticism. Its plausibilities to be removed by a higher development of spiritual truth. Instances in which society is making satisfactory progress. "Articles of Religion," etc., express a stationary Christianity. The use which Creeds have been to Religion. The argument which insists on certain doctrines being mysterious, examined, and found defective. The Scriptural signification of mystery. Difficulties of Christianity, the results of scholastic controversies. Germs of truth in the Creeds of Christendom. All heresies have claimed a pedigree in the Word. The principal formularies of faith produced under circumstances not favorable to truth. God has spoken with a view to be understood. Progress observable every where but in ecclesiastical sentiments. The mission of the Christianity of the Councils, completed. Causes which may prolong its existence. The arguments by which it holds, that religious truth will not admit of progress like other truths, examined. The general scope, and particular evidence of Scripture, encouraging to the expectation of such progress. Conclusion.

It is said "there is no new thing under the sun," (Eccles. i. 9;) this, doubtless, is true of the physics and philosophy of nature, but not of man's perception of them. The attraction of gravitation might have been coeval with planetary existence, but the world's knowledge of it was new in the time of Sir Isaac Newton. The preacher's assertion may be equally correct of the abstract

sentiments and purposes of Revelation, but not of the mental phenomena for which it has been provided. The fall of man was a new feature in the history of humanity, and the revelations which were successively made to arrest him in his downward course, contained, to him, new sentiments, adapted to meet the new circumstances into which he had descended. Every age appears to have been distinguished by a temper and disposition peculiar to itself; and every individual seems to possess an idiosyncrasy not observable in others; hence, there is something new continually coming into existence.

The establishment of Christianity was a new fact amidst the munificent displays of Providence; and although the Bible contains all the principles that are proper to its existence, it does not follow, that mankind have perceived them all, or that all those are true, which are commonly acknowledged to be so. We could not reasonably arrive at such a conclusion.¹ Christianity is designed to elevate the character of man, and to bring him into a condition of religious existence superior to any he has yet enjoyed. The Scriptures contain many promises of this result. The new heaven and new earth that are to be created;—the new Jerusalem which is to come down from God to be a tabernacle for men, and those other passages on which some have founded their expectancy of a millennial state, (Isaiah lxx. 17; Rev. xxi. 1–3, and xxii. 2–5,) are evidences, from which we may reasonably infer, that a new and improved order of mental and moral activity is at some time to characterize the world. This is to be the result of the reception of true Christianity; and therefore, its principles and doctrines must be adapted to satisfy man's intellectual requirements, during the course of his upward progress; the higher he ascends, the farther he sees; he descends points, which were hid from him at a lower elevation, and although they may be misty, from the distance in which they are first beheld, the fact that they are there, encourages him to attempt a nearer approach for the purpose of obtaining clearer information. And what is to hinder his success? Surely, a Divine Revelation, constructed for the purpose of meeting the religious requirements of men, must be capable of supplying his highest intellectual want in such respects; and therefore, we see no reason why the mind may not make new discoveries in the Scriptures, as well as in

¹ I fully concur with the following statement: "There is, I believe, much in the Bible that has never yet been brought out of it; and there has been much brought out of the Bible, that never was in it. Many passages of Scripture are not turned to all the purposes they are intended to serve; and some have been turned to purposes which they are neither calculated nor intended to serve." — *Discourses on the Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Rev. John Brown, D. D., Professor of Exegetical Theology, in the United Presbyterian Church, Edinburgh, 1850.*

creation. Each is the offspring of the same Divine Mind, and both are intended to exercise the human thought. As the secrets of nature may be disclosed by its investigation, why may not the arcana of Revelation be unveiled through its activity? As we do not see the whole of nature upon its surface, why should we expect to behold the whole of Revelation upon its letter? As there are some natural truths to be discovered from the former, why may there not be some spiritual truths to be developed in the latter? Surely, all the commentaries of the Scriptures which have been issued, and all that mass of theological literature which is in the process of being published, are received on the idea, that the writers have something new to offer respecting their contents; and some new view of mental, moral, and scientific phenomena are continually being introduced for the purpose of Biblical illustration or exposition. The criticisms of modern learning, are also, frequently throwing new light upon the structure and signification of the original text. It is hardly possible to take up a theological work of any pretension, without observing these facts. It is therefore practically admitted, that new views respecting the contents of Revelation have been made, and that others are in the course of being developed.

Not only may we reasonably expect the evolution of some new truths from the Word, but also, the detection of many errors which have been grafted on it. The Scriptures, taken as Divine documents, require interpretation, to elicit their principles, and specially so, to present their general truths for popular acceptance. This has been acknowledged and acted upon, from the earliest periods of the Christian Church. The Jews also adopted a similar course with the Mosaic writings. Now all these interpretations are of human origin, whether they are the productions of individual minds, or the deliberations of Councils. Even the doctrines which have been drawn from them, and sent into the world under ecclesiastical authority, are not to be removed from this predicament. If then, those interpretations are of human origin, and so not infallible, it is not improbable that some errors might have been inferred and propounded; it must be confessed, that there are a variety of sentiments among mankind, which present this aspect. The sections into which Christendom is split, seem to offer decisive proof of this. That which is received as truth by *one*, is pronounced to be an error by *another*. Episcopacy is true in England; it is a heresy in Scotland. A similar remark may be made of still more vital things, for it is well known, that much confusion and dissatisfaction exist concerning them. The duration and prevalence of many doctrines may be owing more to ecclesiastical influence than to sound reason; and therefore, an advanced state of human society, growing out of a superior cul-

tivation and discipline of the intellect, may, as it has been said, not only educe new truths from Revelation, but also detect those inaccurate conclusions, which may have been formed and propagated in a less favorable condition of the world. Religion is founded on Revelation, and therefore, an advancement in the accuracy of our perception respecting the former necessarily implies that an improvement may take place in our knowledge of the latter.

Jesus said unto his disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," (John xvi. 12;) and again he said, "The time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." (John xvi. 25.) Here then, are promises to communicate higher information respecting important truths, than had been previously made; that which was necessary for their reception was a suitability of state on the part of man. We do not now inquire what these things were, which the Lord had to say, nor whether the promise, to show the Father plainly, has been actually fulfilled; because, before this could be done satisfactorily, it would be proper to inquire into the nature of the condition which was necessary, and whether that condition has been attained by society. Our object in adducing these passages, is to show, from the Author of Christianity himself, that light is not only an essential part of Christian existence, but also, that its purer brilliance was to be a progressive development. Every one knows, that the virtues of Christianity result from cultivation, and that they are successive gifts and growths; and to say, that the wisdom of Christianity is not attainable by the same process, is to assert what all experience contradicts.

The documents on which Christianity now rests, were successively provided. It was only by degrees, that the apostles were made acquainted with what they knew of its principles. These facts stand on the very face of its history; and is it not equally evident, that certain interpretations of those documents have been similarly progressive? The doctrinal sentiments produced in the fourth century, were not those which were cherished in the first; and every one, at all acquainted with ecclesiastical history, knows of various phases, under which Christianity has been presented in different periods of its existence. Christians have consented to receive the Scriptures as of Divine authority, but they have not been unanimous in their interpretations of them. Differences of opinion soon sprung up: even the apostles, at one time, were not agreed upon every point;¹ if they afterwards became

¹ Several instances of this are intimated in the Acts of the Apostles. See chapters x. xi. 2, 3, and xv. Peter, writing of some of the principles of the Christian faith, says that Paul, speaking of these things in his

harmonious in their conclusions, it was plainly the result of a successive development. So were the sentiments which produced the eastern and western Churches. The Christianity of the Pope and the Patriarch, of Luther, Calvin, and some others which have grown out of the Reformation,—was progressively evolved. None, from these quarters, can put forth a consistent opposition to the views here contended for; nor can all the forms and sentiments, which are claimed for Christianity, be true; each may retain some of its elemental properties, but no one of them can be said to possess its complete embodiment. In no case, therefore, is the development of Christianity now complete. If, at any period of its history, it has been so distinguished, neither the sacred nor the secular historian has recorded it. The learned, the candid, the conscientious, in each division of the Christian world, feel that there are defects and deficiencies in the system which they have preferred, and they look forward, with a rational expectancy, to a period when that which is perfect will come. The realization of this hope may be deferred, but it cannot be entirely defeated, because it is a Divine promise.

If we look into the Christian world with open eyes, we behold a large amount of disorganization. The Anglican church has become remarkable for this fact. It is also observable in other communions. This was not formerly the case. What can be the cause of it? We think that it is traceable to the circumstance of the human mind having, by a course of favorable Providence, been brought into a stronger light. Men have begun to see deeper and further into theological things than was formerly the case. They feel that they are in a freer state of thinking about matters of faith, and consequently about the spiritual things of the Word, and this freedom gives a greater range to their perception, and is suggestive of a variety of wants. It is vain to deny this fact, or to question its value. Thousands feel that it is true, and know that it is a blessing. So long as men were satisfied with the twilight of uncertain knowledge, they remained at rest; but the advent of a brighter morning has shown the deficiencies of their evening's faith. Some see an obscurity in one point, some observe a paradox in others; and many recognize a series of difficulties pressing for a solution which they cannot give. Hence has arisen the uneasiness of the churches. Alarm has been excited in many of the clergy, and some of the reformed, fearing that their farsightedness would conduct them out of

Epistles, has said some things hard to be understood, (2 Peter iii. 16;) and Paul, treating of certain sentiments that were held by Peter, says that he withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. (Gal. ii. 11.)

14 CHRISTIANITY LUMINOUS — SOCIETY PROGRESSING.

Christianity, have made retrogressions to Rome.¹ They have rebuked the yearnings of their own onward thoughts, and sought protection from them in the stand-still thinkings of the Papacy. But their secessions will not, cannot stop the vigorous inquiries that are commenced. They may allay the fears of some — fears excited by the unsatisfactory nature of some imperfect views of Christian doctrine — but they will not extinguish the *hopes*, or lessen the *exertions* of those, who believe that the genuine system is capable of supplying the highest demands of any intellectual requisition.

True Christianity is a luminous system of faith in spiritual realities. It descends from a Divine source, and is destined to take a higher position in human affairs than any it has yet ascended. There is reason for believing that the scepticism which has prevailed, was brought into existence by the defective views, which the churches have presented of Revelation. The objections which have been urged against Christianity, lie against its *perversions* rather than its *truths*; and the defences which have been undertaken on those grounds, have not always been so successful as could be desired. Accurate doctrines upon the subject will thoroughly dissipate the difficulties which have been openly raised by many, and secretly experienced by most. The infidelity of future times will be deprived of its present plausibilities, by the higher developments of religious knowledge which are now in progress. Free inquiry should be *courted*, rather than *condemned*; for the result must always be favorable to that which has God for its author.

There can be no doubt that society is progressing. The empiricisms of the past are giving way, and the dawn of a brighter future is begun. Men feel that there is a higher eminence to be obtained, than that to which they have yet arrived; and the theoretical sentiments which are pressing society forward, must have some practical issue; — an issue superior to the past, and in

¹ It is remarkable, that these secessions have not been brought about by any convictions respecting the truth of the peculiar dogmas of the Church of Rome. Neither the worship of saints; transubstantiation; purgatory; nor the practice of the confessional, have had any particular charms. They have operated rather as repellents than otherwise. Moreover, these transitions could not have been desired for any superior light, which the Romish Church shed upon the ordinary doctrines of Christianity, for on those points, both parties held a common opinion. They, who have gone over to the Papal communion, fancied there was no relief from the difficulties they were perceiving in the commonly received sentiments of Christianity, but that which was afforded by the "authority of the church;" and so they have sought deliverance from the freedom of their own thinking, by plunging into the bondage of that which has been provided by another!

advance of the present. That which, in *science* and *religion*, was received by our predecessors a century or so ago, has ceased to be satisfactory now. Religion is eminently disturbed. The ship is in a storm, and the master is not present; relief will come, when a due sense of the danger is experienced. Night is not intended to be perpetual; the day will arrive. Science, (the handmaid of religion,) is much more tranquil. She has put away conjecture and invoked demonstration, and her efforts have been successful in a variety of ways. Her name is not now given to *fancies*, but to *facts*; and the progress which has been made in many of her departments, is as useful as it is surprising. If many of the professors who have passed away at no very distant period, could revisit the earth, they would be amazed at the improvements which their professions have undergone. Speculations are consigned to the poetry of the past, and nothing but truth can be associated with the satisfactions of the future. This is true, not only in reference to the *physical* sciences, but it is also true of *mental* sciences — the sciences which treat of man and mind. Men are on the eve of knowing more of themselves than they have heretofore done, and thus to realize the ancient maxim, "Know thyself,"¹ — a knowledge which is requisite to resist imposture and superstition, and to provide for the enjoyment of enlightened rationality and spiritual freedom. Even politics are not exempt from these indications of advancement. They are not so high in the scale of justice, nor so broad in the fields of liberty, as sound wisdom may desire; yet they are aiming at higher principles to guide them, than mere emergence or expediency. And although they are still experimenting with the lives of criminals, and the property of the people, and failures in those experiments are frequently occurring, yet the enactments with which it is intended to repeat them, are drawn with greater caution, and sounder judgment. Our criminal code has become less sanguinary and cruel, and our civil laws more equitable and easy of administration. The education of the masses is publicly recognized as a blessing to be attained, so that provisions are continually being made for lessening the causes of political grievance, and supplying the sources of content.

It is impossible to compare the temper and disposition of to-day, with the sentiments and feelings of a century ago, without recognizing a mighty stride to have been effected. All grades of society feel that they are moving on. They may not, in all cases, know the precise points to which they are progressing, yet

¹ Thales, the Milesian, was the first who is said to have employed this phrase. It was afterwards adopted by Chilo, the Lacedæmonian, and is one of the three precepts which Pliny affirms to have been consecrated at Delphos in golden letters. See *Mason on Self-Knowledge*.

they spontaneously believe that all things are conducing to their advantage. The sentiment, that "there is a good time coming," is felt to express something more than the name of a ballad ; it indicates a popular hope — an expectation that must be realized. The "Articles of Religion" and the "Confession of Faith," cannot stop this progress. Those documents express the Christianity of Councils, and thus a stationary Christianity. So far as they are the true exponents of Revelation, they must point to an onward course. This is the necessary tendency of all Divine truth. But it is absurd to suppose, that the authors of these productions have therein anticipated the want of every age, and that the minds of men are not to stir beyond the precincts which they have drawn.

The Christianity which arose out of the Councils was, in some measure, a departure from the simplicity of the Gospel, and scholastic divinity supplanted the divinity of Christ. The Nicene and Athanasian formularies may have been useful to the church : they have preserved within its pale, an acknowledgment of the Deity of Jesus, in opposition to the sentiments with which it was attempted to be extinguished ; nevertheless, that doctrine is associated with descriptions and differences, which are embarrassing in no small degree. A like statement may be made respecting some other doctrines which they assert ; still, it is willingly acknowledged, that they have contributed something to the safety of true religion, during periods of remarkable peril. Though in themselves somewhat husky, they indicate the existence of a kernel. They declare the existence of certain lands, though they have not accurately drawn the maps. There are desiderata which have yet to be developed, and their accomplishment will not involve the idea of a new Christianity, but the fuller evolution of that which is true respecting it. The mystery in which it has been usual to enshrine and protect certain doctrines from the scrutiny of reason, is gradually being pushed aside ; and the features, which are seen to be behind it, are such as to create a demand for other definitions, from which that protection may be dismissed.

It is urged by those who uphold the argument of mystery, that men believe in a great variety of things in nature, which they do not comprehend, and that this being the case with man, in reference to the works of God, it is no inconsistency for the church to require it in reference to the Word of God. Now there is a fallacy in this, for it is not true, that men believe a great variety of things in nature which they do not comprehend. They have evidences more or less strong for all that they believe respecting them. But supposing it were not so, the argument is unsound. Surely, to believe in something incomprehensible in nature, in

which we are *not required to believe*, and in which neither religion nor salvation is concerned, is no reason why we should believe what is asserted to be incomprehensible in Doctrines which we *are required to believe*, and on which, it is said, true religion and salvation are dependent. The analogy fails in all its principal members, the moment the comparison is instituted. But what philosophic, or other proposition, pertaining to the phenomena of nature, is it, that men are said to believe, without understanding? What mysterious thing is it, whose paradoxes are so numerous, and contradictions so complete, that we shut our eyes concerning them, and say that we believe? The notion has no ground in fact; there is nothing in nature into which philosophers forbid men to inquire. There are no objects on which the understanding is not to exercise its powers; all are open to the profoundest investigation; men are encouraged in the pursuit, and no one is ever considered as perpetrating heresy by such a course. But how different is all this to what the church asserts respecting the investigation of her dogmata. She demands the "prostration of the understanding." (Charge of Dr. Porteus, Lord Bishop of London.) Again then, we say, there is not the slightest analogy between the supposed belief of incomprehensibilities in nature, and those assumed to be contained in the Christian doctrine.

We do not mean to say, there are no mysteries in nature. We readily admit, that there are a great many phenomena, the *causes* of which are unknown; but for that very reason men do not believe any thing about them, nor is it required by any authority that they should do so. Take, for instance, the phenomena of electricity. Men believe in its existence because they can see it, feel it, direct its course, and make it tributary to the purposes of civilized life; but what it is, considered in itself, men do not know; and therefore, they do not believe any thing about it. If any one propounds any speculations respecting what it is, and he and others believe them to be true, then this belief springs out of investigation and evidence: it is, therefore, not a belief, from which the understanding is excluded. Take such another instance. It is urged, that men believe in the vital principle, and yet that they know nothing respecting it. This, however, is a loose and fallacious way of putting the subject. It is true, that men do believe in the existence of the vital principle, because they have evidences of it in the multitude of forms in which it is displayed. This, so far then, is not a blind belief: but of the essential nature of that existence, so far as men are ignorant of it, so far they can have no belief concerning it. Their faith stops with the cessation of the evidence. Thus, then, men believe in the existence of the vital principle,

because it is a subject of demonstration ; but they do not believe any thing about the essential nature of it, because they do not possess the requisite information.

It is further said, that men believe in animal and vegetable life, and yet know nothing of their distinction. This is a fallacy precisely similar to the last. They are two distinct propositions, having no necessary connection with each other. Every one may see, that to believe in their existence, and to believe in the cause of their distinction, are two very different things. Men believe in animal and vegetable life, because they see it, and they may believe that life, in its origin, is one and the same, because it is an intelligible proposition, the truth of which both the Scriptures and philosophy attest. They may also believe, upon the same evidence, that the difference of life, observable in the respective kingdoms of nature, is not a distinction of essential life, but only a difference in the created forms intended for its reception and manifestation. It is, then, not even true to say, that men believe in a distinction of life, and know nothing of the cause of it. So far as they know of the cause, so far they believe, but they who *know* nothing about it, cannot *believe* any thing about it.

The argument of mystery then, lends no support to that cause, in favor of which it is commonly employed. It is a mere invention, intended to apologize, to intelligent inspection, for the paradoxes which are contained within some of the dogmas of the popular faith.

The time, however, for apologetics is passing by. God's teachings do not require to be excused for deficiency of light, or defectibility of beauty. There is a native loveliness about genuine Christianity, which can thoroughly dispense with them. Mystery, in the sense of that which is utterly unknowable, constitutes no portion of her train. It has grown out of the forms which the Councils have given to Christianity, and it is intended to *silence*, not to *convince*. The Scriptures never employ that word with such a meaning. The term, in them, simply expresses the idea of an *arcanum*, which has not yet been learned, but which, nevertheless, instruction may convey. It is not beyond the mental reach, because it is given unto the disciples to know the mysteries of the kingdom. (Matt. xiii. 11.) The mysteries of Christianity, therefore, are not incomprehensibilities, but interior truths, which may be satisfactorily seen by minds suitably prepared.* To suppose, as it is commonly done, that its principal

* The only instance in the Scriptures in which the term "mystery" is employed to denote something that is utterly and forever out of the reach of human comprehension, is in the Revelations, chap. xvii. 5. The woman who sat upon the scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, and

doctrines are not to be understood, is the same thing as to say they are not instructive, for how can a mind be edified by that, which it does not know? It naturally asks, If I am not to comprehend the sentiments which I am required to believe, how am I to know that they are true, and what guaranty have I, that they are not false? If I hesitate, I shall be charged with a want of faith; and if I say I believe, I necessarily feel that my belief is blind. This is not a hypothetical case: it is the absolute position, in which the Christian world is placed by all those who employ mystery, as an apology for difficulties in the doctrines which are required to be believed. It is therefore a question, whether those *difficulties*, as well as the *apologies*, are not of human origin; — whether they are not excrescences, which scholastic controversies have fixed upon the Christian system, rather than its own legitimate offspring. We think so, and in making this confession, we have preferred honesty to orthodoxy. If men would be true to the convictions wrought out by their own earnest inquiries, those difficulties would successively pass away, and Christianity would soon take a higher platform, and present a lovelier shape than heretofore. Genuine truth must be unobjectionable, not to ignorance perhaps, (for that will always cavil,) but to sound and pious learning. That this is not the present condition of the Christian doctrines, is admitted upon all hands; and dissatisfaction, thence arising, is experienced in every quarter. Surely these circumstances are not to be perpetual things. Truth cannot have been intended to remain in continual obscurity; nor can it have been the design of benevolence, to tantalize the mind with the hope of a satisfaction which never can be gratified. The Scriptures encourage us to take a brighter view.

Certain germs of truth have been preserved in the creeds of Christendom, but they require to be delivered from the notions which have been ingrafted on them by *Scholia* and prescription, before they can show their real beauty. To effect this deliverance, men must begin with greater earnestness to take their Christianity from the statements of the Bible, in preference to the formularies of the Councils, and aim more directly at the comprehension of the Scriptures, than the upholding of human inference. We may be told that those formularies are drawn from the Word: every heresy has put forth a similar claim, and therefore, that is no reason why the testimony of the Scriptures is not always to be preferred. Besides, every one who knows

who had in her hand a golden cup full of abominations, had also "upon her forehead a name written, Mystery." This woman is, upon all hands, admitted to be the symbol of a perverted church; and, therefore, the mystery inscribed upon her forehead denotes her falsifications of genuine truth, and so causing them to be incomprehensible to men.

the history of the circumstances under which these formularies were produced, is aware that they were not favorable to sound conclusions. Truth cannot be dispassionately weighed under the influence of party excitements. A political element, also, underlay the religious contest, so that, according to Jortin, "if such Councils made righteous decrees, it must have been by strange good luck."

The Scriptures are the authorities to which all theological argument must finally submit. These may be understood, but this, in all cases, cannot be said of the human formularies. The Word is constructed with a view to our comprehension of its teachings. God, in vouchsafing it, did not forget that he has given us an understanding; neither did he intend, by it, to ignore its activity. God speaks intelligibly to intelligent creatures, and doubtless he intended that they should comprehend what he says. So far as this is done, one of the designs of such utterance is accomplished; so far as it is not done, that Divine purpose is evidently frustrated. To hear and not to understand, was one of the great faults of the Jewish nation, (Is. vi. 9;) and the Lord Jesus Christ most emphatically informs us, that "when any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked *one* and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." (Matt. xiii. 19.) Thus, not to understand the word which we receive, is fraught with great spiritual danger. To be as the mule, without understanding, is a condition of reproach; while to sing praises unto God with the understanding, is an act of commendation, (Psalm xxxii. 9, xlvii. 7;) the Psalmist prayed for understanding, that he might keep the law, (Psalm cxix. 34,) and it was a divine promise to give pastors that should feed the people with understanding, (Jer. iii. 15;) and of the Lord it is said, that he opened the understandings of his disciples that they might understand the Scriptures. (Luke xxiv. 45.) Hence, the effort to comprehend the Divine teachings is laudable and proper; we cannot otherwise become intelligent recipients of God's communications. If, then, the Scriptures are capable of being understood, it is evident that all the doctrines which are rightly inferred from them, may also be comprehended, and that they will admit of being represented in language free from all inconsistency of expression.*

We do not mean to say, that every doctrine of the Sacred Scriptures will admit of being comprehended by all conditions of the human mind; for there are some doctrines of a highly recon-

* As an example, contrary to this reasonable conclusion, we take the liberty of referring the reader to the Athanasian Creed, — a document which seems to have been surreptitiously introduced to the church, since it never received the sanction of any general Council.

dite character, and there are some minds deeply ignorant of all spiritual things; it is therefore plain that the former are not to be understood by the latter. What we mean is, that there are no doctrines of Revelation but what are within the comprehension of minds trained and disciplined for the purpose; or in other words, that there is nothing inherent in Revelation to prevent it from being understood, and nothing inherent in the mind of man to prevent it from understanding God's communications.

It seems almost superfluous to insist upon these views; and it would be so, if the doctrines commonly recognized in the Christian church did not assume an opposite conclusion. The ecclesiastical Trinity and atonement, faith and resurrection, have associated with them the element of incomprehensibility. Inquiry concerning them has to be silenced by invoking the presence of mystery and Omnipotence. This, therefore, raises a doubt, as to whether they are the accurate views of Revelation. The question is not, whether the Scriptures teach doctrines which may be appropriately expressed by these titles, for about this there need be no uncertainty; but whether the aspect which they have taken, in passing through ecclesiastical controversy, and in which they are now presented to the world, is the correct one. We think not, and believe that the stand-still character of the church is to be attributed to this circumstance. These doctrines were inferred many centuries ago, they were urged upon mankind by an ecclesiastical majority, and the church has been continually taught, that it can know no more concerning them; hence, it has ceased to make any intellectual advancement. It has divided into a variety of sects, and sacrificed a large amount of charity; but it knows no more to-day, of what is considered as the essential of Christianity, than it did five hundred years ago. This, to us, is an argument that they are but human opinions; nothing but these, ecclesiastically exercised, could have kept mankind so stationary in their knowledge respecting spiritual things. That which is Divine must contain within itself interior truths which will evolve their brightness, as the human intellect ascends. We see progress every where but in the church, and there we behold dissension. The sentiments which it invented, during the angry disputations of a by-gone age — invented with the appearance of a scriptural pedigree — are found to be unsuitable to an intellectual era. Authorities are attempting to maintain those dogmas, and the populace is demanding their explanation. The former would give it, but cannot — they are bound by human documents, to view them only in one particular direction, they must not lift their eyes any higher than what their predecessors have prescribed, — and hundreds of the latter are convinced, that the

Christianity of the Councils has performed its mission.* It may live among those who can be persuaded, that the doctrines of the church are not intended for the recognition of reason, and that they will not admit of any further development than what has long been known, but these will not be the eminent of our race. We do not say, that they should be forced into the sunshine if they choose to be content with the twilight, but we demur at being kept in their obscurity, when, by a becoming effort, we may secure a greater clearness.

As such persuasions exist, it may be well to notice the matter of them as they are put forth in influential quarters. It is conceded, on all hands, that we may improve our acquaintance with nature to an indefinite extent; creation, it is said, was designed to exercise the human mind and enlarge its faculties; but that religion will not admit of any such process. This, it is maintained, was "designed not so much to exercise the head as to ameliorate the heart." It "was a subject of too essential importance, both to the present and future happiness of man, to be left upon an uncertain footing," and that as "coming from God it must be perfect, and can receive no improvement from the wit of man." (*Dr. Daubeny's Scripture its own Interpreter*, pp. 13, 14.)

Now, are there valid reasons for denying that religious knowledge will admit of progress? Are they found to be satisfactory upon careful reflection? We think not! It is true, that religious knowledge is designed to improve the condition of the heart, but it is equally true, that it was intended to enlarge the perceptions of the head; and to some extent it has accomplished this very purpose. Why should the heart be ameliorated and the head not educated? Why should the interest of the one be attended to, and the corresponding welfare of the other be overlooked? Surely a clean heart will procure a clear head. It is promised that the pure in heart shall see God.† Doubtless the Lord intended, by his Word, to raise the whole man — to

* It is admitted, that this is an "Age of Reason, but a declining Age of Faith." *Scripture its own Interpreter*, (p. 6,) by *Dr. Daubeny, Archdeacon of Sarum*. But to what can this decline be attributable? Faith, founded on genuine truth, and sound reason, must go hand in hand. The one cannot leave the other. If a separation is observable, either the reason must be unsound, or the sentiments of faith defective. But if those doctrines for which faith is demanded, were once supposed to be reasonable inductions from the Scriptures, then, the separation of the reason of this age from them, may be caused by a discovery of some defect in those inductions; and thus it is not reason against faith, but the reason of one age against what the reasonings of another age have produced for faith. That which is true in faith will always be well received by that which is sound in reason.

† Matt. v. 8. The Supreme Being is called God in the Scriptures, when his truth is treated of.

enlighten the understanding as well as to purify the heart — to give him an intellectual insight into what is spiritually true, as well as to provide for him an affectionate interest in what is good.

The Scriptures, which require that we should be just, put no bar on the exercise of our judgment. In calling forth the activities of charity, there is no intimation that faith should be obscure. We cannot be certain that the heart is set right towards spiritual things, unless the intellect be adequately informed respecting them. Christianity is not a blind feeling, but an enlightened sentiment. The disciples, in order to be the light of the world, must be enlightened. The light must shine, and there can be no doubt that its brightness will increase upon the mental eye.

But how can the circumstance of an advancement in religious knowledge, imply the existence of religion upon an uncertain footing? The question is, not whether that knowledge, considered as a Divine communication, will admit of improvement by the wit of man, but, whether man may not improve his knowledge by clearer perceptions of it. Considered in itself, as coming from God, it must be a perfect gift, but it does not follow that man has at once obtained the most perfect possible perception of it. It is notorious that it has not been so. How many cases could be selected from Jewish history, in which that people did not know the nature of those truths which were supernaturally announced to them! That was a development of a subsequent age. It is admitted, that the inspired writers themselves often prophesied obscurely, and saw but in part, those things which were foreshadowed in their utterance.* It is a canon for the criticism of prophecy, that its true meaning is not clearly discoverable until the actual occurrence of the events to which it refers. These circumstances clearly imply a progress in our knowledge of some divine things; and who shall declare what among such things is not subjected to the same law? The signification of a large amount of prophecy is very obscurely known. Yet it must be intended that man, at some time, should know its meaning. Whensoever that takes place, then there will be an addition to his information concerning Divine things long ago announced. Revelation may contain within itself every thing which it is possible to know of genuine Religion in all future time; but that fact is entirely different from the circumstance of man becoming successively acquainted with its higher and purer truths. The mine exists, and has long been worked, but that is no proof that the purest metal has been found. God

* Dr. Vaughan. *British Quarterly Review*, Nov. 1851, p. 485, and most other writers on the subject of Inspiration.

has provided his Word, but he does not force our minds ; he leaves these to be exercised, in freedom, on his gift ; and therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude, that as the mind improves in its acquaintance with the works of God, that some progress must be made towards a clearer comprehension of his Word. The apostle counsels us to grow in the knowledge of Divine things, (2 Peter iii. 18 ;) this would be meaningless advice, if our argument were not true. It not only applies to the man, *vir*, but also to the man, *homo*, to *society*, as well as to the *individual*.

If the views of the Christian system commonly received had been suddenly evolved, there might have been some consistency in those who hold them, in maintaining that no more was intended to be known concerning it. But this was not the case. The Three Creeds in which it is now presented, and which, together, are considered to express the quintessence of Christianity, were produced at different times by human authors. The "Apostles' Creed" is not the production of the apostles. Natalis Alexander, and Du Pin, distinguished men in the church of Rome, and Archbishops Wake and Usher, together with Vossius, Sir Peter King, and Justice Bailey, high authorities among the Protestants, have all come to this conclusion ; so also has Dr. Nares, in his "Discourse on the Three Creeds." Dr. Hind, in his "Rise and Early Progress of Christianity," admits the same fact, and Mosheim says, "that all who have the least knowledge of antiquity, look upon the opinion as entirely false, and destitute of all foundation." Now the Nicene creed, according to Dr. Nares, is an extension and explanation of some of the articles of its predecessor ; and the Athanasian is a further explanation and enlargement of the same articles against the sects and parties by whom they were opposed. These creeds then have a history — a history in some points not so creditable to ingenuousness as could be desired. Now, as human productions, we do not see why they should be considered as standards of religious thought, beyond which there is to be no progress. That is a concession to be made to the Scriptures only. So far as the creeds indicate the truth, it ought to be received and cherished, but that affords no argument against the possibility of a brighter view of it. As the sentiments which they express came out by degrees, and as they were unfolded by the requirements of society, it cannot be consistently denied, by those who find their Christianity in those documents, that a new and improved condition of society may furnish occasion for higher and more satisfactory developments of it.

Another authority among those who hold, that all the essential doctrines of the Scriptures have long been known, tells us, that

"it is an error to assume, that because the light of reason will be progressing, in respect to certain departments of human knowledge, to the end of time, the same must be true of the light of Revelation. This is to subject the supernatural to the laws of the natural, so as to destroy all distinction between them. It is to limit the All-sufficient, and say that he can do nothing by special intervention, that he has not done by ordinary law. Whereas, the very idea of a Revelation supposes the coming in of a new power and a new law. It is God interposing to do, by his authority, what could not be done by our intelligence." (*British Quarterly Review*, Nov. 1851, p. 484.)

This, perhaps, is the strongest defence of which the subject will admit, and yet it is fallacious. Although the things which are the subjects of Divine Revelation could not have been discovered by human reason, yet human reason must be capable of recognizing their propriety when so discovered. Without admitting this, we do not see how the Scriptures could be at all appreciated. It therefore follows, that as the light of reason is progressive, that the light of Revelation will display to it a purer brilliancy during the process of its advancement. A defective vision cannot see all the perfections of Revelation. The eye affected with a cataract, sees the shining of the sun but dimly; as the scale is removed, his brightness becomes more and more conspicuous. Hence the admission, that the light of reason is progressive, necessarily implies that the light of Revelation will become to it more perfect and intelligible.

The statement, that "this is to subject the supernatural to the laws of the natural," is not so forcible an objection as is supposed. It expresses no paradox: it is no uncommon fact. The soul, as a spiritual, is a supernatural existence, and is not this, every hour, more or less subjected to the natural laws of the body? Its spiritual thinkings cannot become audible but by the natural laws of speech. God has given a Revelation for the recognition of reason, and thus he has provided information by supernatural means, and mercifully subjected it to inspection and reception by the natural laws of our reason. Without this we could not see its value. The truths of religion supernaturally provided, were never intended to abrogate the natural laws of thinking, belonging to our minds. The Lord has mercifully subjected the one to the other, nor does this subjection "destroy all distinction between them," as is pretended. We do not lose sight of the separate existence of the soul, when we declare that it manifests its existence through certain natural laws of the body. When reason is soundly acting according to its laws, it never forgets that the Revelation on which it is engaged is a supernatural gift. The distinction is scrupulously preserved.

How the circumstance of progressive reason, recognizing as it advances, a superior light in Revelation, can be considered as "limiting the All-sufficient, and saying that he can do *nothing* by special intervention, that he has not done by ordinary law," we do not understand. It suggests to us no such an idea. Revelation is a special intervention of God, but he has not specially interposed to make all men see the light of it; *that* he has left to be recognized by man's freedom and reason, and hence arises his accountability.

It is true that the "idea of Revelation supposes the coming of a new power, and a new Law," but it does not follow, that men should at once experience all the strength of that power, or see all the purity of that law; they were not only adapted to the wants of the times in which they were originally provided, but to all future conditions of our race. The Word emits superior light as men are prepared to receive it, and thus God's Revelation is so constructed as to be capable of furnishing information on Spiritual topics, suitable to the requirements of the highest intellect, as well as to the lowest apprehensions of men; and thus it is God interposing to do, by his authority, what could not be done by our intelligence.

But if all the essential light of Revelation has been emitted, as it is commonly supposed, how does it happen that every division of the church in which the Word is received, is experiencing the effects of obscurity, and sighing for a superior knowledge concerning it? The practical condition of men, in reference to this light, shows that their theories respecting its complete emission, are unsound. To admit that men are progressing in their acquaintance with the works of God, and to deny that they can make any advancement in the knowledge of his Word, seems a paradox. It assumes that all is known which can be known, amidst the practical confession that more may be obtained. Clearer information respecting the truth of the Word does not imply any alteration in its character; that which it supposes is some deficiency in the previous apprehensions of men; of this, history furnishes us with an abundance of instances; and as there is no law commanding us to abide forever in the human dicta of any age, we think the argument, which would lead us to expect some important increase in our knowledge of Divine things, is not only sound and reasonable, but also favored by the general scope of the Scriptures themselves, as well as by particular promises.

The general scope of the Scriptures is plainly to advance society in the knowledge and love of spiritual things. Although what they state of God, and the spiritual life of man, must be always true, an inferior state of society cannot perceive it so accurately as one that is highly cultivated. The superior con-

dition must see more in it, and around it, than that which is not so favorably circumstanced; and that it contains a higher Divine truth, suited to the requirements of the higher human state, is one of the Peculiarities of Revelation. Much is required from those to whom much is given. But the Scriptures are an equal gift to all. The gift then, which is referred to, is the discernment of their higher teachings, by the higher states of society.

On particular promises we cannot dwell. Every one knows of many statements of the Word, in which, what is commonly called, "the future glory of the Church," and the "restoration of Israel,"* are either treated of, or foretold. It is also admitted, that there are several other favorable predictions, the precise meaning of which is not ascertained. Doubtless these things have to be fulfilled; "Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19.) The accomplishment of these circumstances implies a superior state of religious information, as well as an additional amount. Moreover we are taught to pray, that the will of our Divine Father may be done on earth, as it is in Heaven. (Matt. vi. 9, 10.) This instruction would not have been given, unless the object of it were attainable. This, therefore, supposes a condition of excellence, at which society has not yet arrived.

In reference to Jesus Christ, and the blessings of Christianity, it is written, that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." (Is. ix. 7.) This is usually interpreted to mean, that there will be an enlargement of the number of those who acknowledge the Lord and his kingdom. This is to be expected, but the statement implies something more. The Lord's *government* is exercised by means of the laws of truth, and his *peace* is established by means of the principles of love. These laws and principles, considered as the Lord's, are infinite; of them, therefore, increase is not predicable: consequently, the increase which is declared concerning them, must refer to a progressive advancement in men's perceptions of those excellences. Hence, the expectancy of a superior state of religious knowledge is not only founded in reason, but encouraged by Revelation.

The reader must look about him, to see whether the time for the commencement of such a state has yet arrived. Whether the circumstances of society and its scientific position are not such as to require some advancement in its knowledge of religious truth. We do not mean to say that scientific learning can, of itself, bring about that knowledge. We entertain no such principle. Our argument is, that the attainment of this position,

* See Isaiah ii. 4; xi. 6, and a large portion of the Revelation. Consult, also, the commentaries respecting them.

on the part of society, furnishes an occasion for the beginning of such a development — a development in which the highest truth of religion shall harmonize with the soundest discoveries of science — a development to be commenced by the Divine Providence raising up a suitable instrument for the purpose. (See this question discussed in the fifth section of *Noble's Appeal*.) All discoveries of truth, especially of religious truth, have had such a beginning, and it always must be so. Society may not at first recognize his uses. Its best benefactors have always been for some time misunderstood, though the period has come when their value has been acknowledged. Religious society has always been the last to admit improvement. Reformations have been effected, notwithstanding the resistance which has been offered to them. Apostasy cannot always flourish. Truth cannot be kept in obscurity for ever. God, in his own good time, will bring about the overthrow of falsehood, and secure a permanent abiding-place for his wisdom among mankind.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA OF GOD'S EXISTENCE ; THE UNIVERSALITY OF ITS ACKNOWLEDGMENT, AND THE MEANS FOR ITS PERPETUATION.

ARGUMENT. The Bible received as an inspired book. Inspiration implies the existence of God and the human soul. Objections considered. Ideas of God and of the spirituality of man have been coeval with the human race. Inquiry, how did the first men obtain such knowledge ? The Atheist's, Deist's, and Christian's opinions on this question, stated. The Atheistic notion of its having originated in ignorance or fear exposed. Several Deistical speculations on the subject considered. When natural theology took its rise. Its use to confirm the idea of God's existence, not to originate it. The most extensive knowledge of natural phenomena does not introduce us to spiritual things. The inability of natural theology to conduct the mind to a conception of a First Cause. It accounts for the origin of the form and order of nature, but not for the matter in which they are displayed. The Atheist's stand, and the Deist's difficulty. Absurdities to which mere philosophy on the subject has led. The Christian view the only one capable of accounting for the phenomenon. No connate ideas. What the existence of an idea involves. Simple ideas true. False ideas only predicable of those which are complex. The existence of the idea of God, a proof that he exists. An idea of the supernatural, such as God, is the result of Revelation. Suggestion as to the means by which it was first effected. Evidence from history and philosophy that it must have originally come from God. Its propagation by teaching, assisted by other means. An idea of God requisite to the continuation of man. Observations on influx ; what it is, and how it has contributed to perpetuate the idea of God's existence after Revelation had disclosed it.

WHATEVER may be the condition of man, the Bible teaches him to hope for better things. He is not to rest satisfied with any present attainment, but to press forward to a higher mark. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." (Amos vi. 1.) Moral and mental acquirements have no absolute stopping-place. Whosoever they are stayed in their onward progress, we may trace the cause to the hand of an oppressor, attempting to turn aside the purposes of God. His Book contemplates the restoration of that image and likeness of himself, which man lost in the process of his fall, and it is designed to assist him in the promotion of that object. As Christians, we receive this book as a Divine composition, containing a Revelation of God, and from God, communicated to us through the inspiration of men, raised up for the purpose of writing it.

Objectors say this book takes for granted two disputable points; namely, the existence of God as the revealer, and the existence of the human spirit capable of receiving his inspiration. It is true that these facts are taken for granted by those who receive the Bible as a Divine production.

There must be a point from which to start in our inquiries respecting its character. The necessity of a Divine Revelation implies man's ignorance of these two things; and the gift of such revelation proves their reality. If man did not know there was a God, and if he were unacquainted with the spiritualities of his own nature, the circumstance of such a revelation being made to him is a proof of both — a proof independently of any precise statements contained in that Revelation, which may authoritatively announce them. A Divine Revelation has been made, therefore, God and the human soul exist.

To this the objector may say "I must then put aside the question of the Bible as a Revelation: I cannot receive a book, from the pretension of which such surprising inferences are drawn, until the two points taken for granted, receive some other settlement which I can rationally understand." But will the points admit of such a settlement? Could the knowledge of them ever have entered into the world independently of Revelation? Ideas of God and of the human soul exist. They have prevailed during all historical time, and among all civilized people; even savage tribes are not entirely without them. We do not mean to say, that such ideas have always been true or clear; this has not been the case; they have been very various in this respect, at different times, and among different people. Such differences have arisen from various circumstances, all of which are traceable to the sensualities and corruptions of men. But it is not the character, or the form of the ideas, that have been practically displayed in different ages and by various nations of the world, of

which we now speak, but of that universal impression which prevails respecting the existence of those things. The Atheists of civil life are not entirely without them; the facts which they indicate may be contrary to their speculations, but not to their entire experience. If any of them insist that they have no such experience, we, of course, believe them, but it does not follow that they have observed their experience correctly; and even if they have, their case does not disprove what every one else acknowledges to be true. If they have no possession of the gold, that is no evidence that all others are similarly destitute. The blind man truly says he does not see, but it does not follow that all other men are deprived of sight. He, then, who insists that he has no such experience as that adverted to, is only earnest in telling us of an exceptional case.

Now, as the impressions and consequent ideas respecting the existence of God and the human soul prevail among mankind, and as they have always done so,* and as no period, and scarcely any people, can be shown to have been without them, whence did they originate? how did the first men obtain such knowledge? We propose to attempt the solution of these questions; but, in the first place, we shall inquire respecting the origin of the idea of God with primitive men. The determination of this point will also settle the origin of our knowledge concerning the existence of the human soul.

Now various opinions have prevailed upon this subject. They may, however, be divided into three general classes, among each of which there is a diversity of sentiment respecting it.

First, the Atheists, who assert that there is no such a being as God! Some of these say that the idea is the offspring of ignorance, and others assert that it is the invention of fear.†

Second, the Deists, who admit that a God exists, but deny

* "There is no nation so wild and savage, no man so rude and uncultivated, whose mind is not imbued with the opinion that there are gods. Many have wrong sentiments concerning them, but all think there is a Divine Power and Nature." — Cicero "*De Nat. Deo*." "There can hardly be found a tribe so dark and barbarous as to be without some kind of worship, and some belief in a future state of existence." — *A Discourse of Natural Theology* by Lord Brougham, p. 130. To these statements there may be some slight exceptions. Locke, *On the Human Understanding*, refers to some people, reported by navigators and others, "amongst whom there was found to be no notion of a God, and no religion." — *Book i. chap. 4. and 8.* Swedenborg, also, remarks that there were people born in remote islands, who had no knowledge at all concerning God. — *True Christian Religion*, No. 274. These cases, however, are so few as to be of little force against the general argument above adduced.

† The *Système de la Nature* of which Mirabaud is the reputed author. Vol. 2. p. 8. 9. See also Robinet's treatise *De la Nature*, and Spinoza in the preface to his *Tractatus Theologico-politicus*. The same notion has been asserted by more ancient atheists.

that the Scriptures are any revelation from him! Among them, some maintain that the idea of his existence is impressed upon us by the hand of nature: some, that it is a philosophical idea, (French Deists of the last century;) and others, that it is derived from feeling and natural logic. (Voltaire, Phil. Dict. Art. God.)

Third, the Christians, who believe in God's existence, and receive the Bible as a Divine communication from him. Among some of them, there is no very defined opinion respecting the origin of this idea, but others insist that it is the sole issue of Revelation. (Swedenborg and the members of the New Church. See *True Christian Religion*. No. 11.)

We notice the Atheistic and Deistic opinions chiefly with the view of contrasting their obscurities with the light which Revelation sheds upon the subject.

First, then, some of the Atheists pretend that the idea of a God has arisen out of our ignorance. It is said that men, having carried their process of reasoning upon the subject to its utmost limits, and finding that there is something beyond, which they are incapable of comprehending, they have dignified that something with the name of God, and thus, that the incomprehensible something, so named, is nothing more than a point of human ignorance. Here premises are assumed which are not true, and therefore, the conclusion must be false. Men did not carry their reasonings upon the subject to their utmost limits, until long after the idea had been known and cherished; and when they did so, — if that has ever yet been done, — they were not stopped in their inquiries, by their ignorance, as it is pretended, but rather surprised by a sense of that overwhelming intelligence which was seen to be every where abounding; it is, therefore, not man's ignorance of what he did not know, that is called God, but, perceiving extensive wisdom every where surrounding him, he has been led to regard it as a confirmation of the idea, derived to him from another source.

Others of this class urge that the idea of a God was produced out of man's fears; that is to say, that fear, induced by the vicissitudes of material nature, first suggested the notion of superior powers existing, and that superstition afterwards embodied them into the imagination of a personal God. Lucretius is among the first who gave this opinion so distinct a form; * it has since been frequently repeated by other atheists, and Mirabaud states it thus: "The first theology of man was grounded in fear modelled by ignorance." (*System of Nature*. Vol. 2, p. 8.) Now it is to be observed, that this is mere asser-

* In his Latin poem *De Rerum Natura*, of which there is an English translation by Creech, and a refutation in French, by Cardinal de Polignac. The work is the system of Democritus in verse.

tion, unsupported by any evidence, contrary to all history, and without the recommendation of a single fact. It cannot be shown that the fears of any people ever did produce such an idea; it cannot be shown that fear has a tendency to produce it. We admit that many shocking ideas respecting God have existed among mankind, and that they have been associated with fears of no ordinary character; we admit that fear has attached to the Supreme Being many attributes which he cannot possibly possess, but these are very different things from that of fear giving origin to the idea of God's existence. They are mere excrescences, which human corruptions have fastened upon the idea, long after it had been introduced to the mind, and the object of it intelligently acknowledged in society. The Bible (to which we here refer as merely containing the most ancient historical account extant,) assures us, in its opening chapters, that men acknowledged God before they experienced fear, and that fear came upon them only as that acknowledgment decreased.*

But why should a sense of fear be considered to have generated the idea of God's existence, in preference to the enjoyment of blessings?† Surely, the possession of security and peace was more likely to have originated the idea of a benevolent Creator, than the experience of calamity and trepidation! The latter condition might have contributed to the idea of a Devil, because it is associated with feelings of insecurity and deprivation, but nothing but the former state could have been connected with man's first idea of a Divine existence. The experience of blessing humiliates the grateful mind, and thus fits it for so exalted a conception. Supposing then, that the idea under consideration had sprung out of some merely human sentiment, it is plain that it must have been the experience of blessing, and not the apprehension of danger; for all tradition, history, and poetry, which have any reference to the primeval condition of man, concur in showing that condition to have been one of blessedness and wisdom, in which the people would not have been led away with an imaginary entity, but kept in freedom, by a clear perception of the real existence of God; and preserved in religion, by a devout acknowledgement of him.

But *Secondly*, some Deists, in rejecting Revelation, say, that the idea of God's existence is impressed upon us by the hand of nature. "Hand of nature" is a very vague expression; we,

* At the creation of man, God communicated with those whom he called Adam, and blessed them; Gen. i. 28. No fear is indicated until after the fall; it was then that Adam said, "I was afraid." Gen. iii. 10.

† There are several valuable arguments on this subject in *Wilson's Lecture on the Existence of God*, and in some of the Editor's notes, to which the reader is referred. The review of the work in the *Intellectual Repository* for 1851 may also be usefully consulted.

however, understand it to mean the organization and instinct peculiar to humanity.* Now, if this had originated the idea of God's existence, it ought to be a uniform impression; this is what is observable of all instinctive things; but as no such uniformity prevails, the "hand of nature" could not have given it; for they, who thus speak of the "hand of nature," usually maintain that it is uniform in its productions.

Others among this class contend, that philosophy was the originator of the idea in question, and thus, that it is a discovery of human wisdom; but the arguments adduced to support this opinion are all overthrown by the facts, that men acknowledged a God before they became philosophers, and believed in the existence of spirituality, prior to the invention of metaphysics. The sciences of reasoning and induction were born in after times.

A third party belonging to this class maintain that the idea of God was the result of feeling and natural logic. *Feeling* is considered to imply a sort of instinctive sense of the existence of such a Being; and *natural logic*, the spontaneous inference which men draw from the phenomena surrounding them, to corroborate the truth of this experience. There can be no doubt of the almost universal prevalence of such a feeling among mankind. But what could have originated this sensation, propagated it so extensively, and given it perpetuity? We answer, that it must arise from that universal influx which flows into the human mind, inclining it to favor a belief in the Divine existence. Still, no man ever experienced such a feeling before that idea had been suggested to him: knowledge is the plane for the reception of such an influx; and that this knowledge could not have sprung out of natural logic, will presently appear.

The advocates of this notion tell us, that the vicissitudes of the seasons, storms and calms, clouds and sunshine, plenty and scarcity, with other occurrences of a similar character, not controllable by man, caused the hand of a master to be felt, and that this, aided by certain spontaneous reasonings and inferences, called natural logic, suggested the idea of a God to man. It is thus regarded as an idea which first began to spring up in some rude and remote ages of man's existence, and that it was afterwards developed into the acknowledgment of a Supreme Being, by reason, intellect, and philosophy. According to this view, the idea is merely a human discovery, having no higher authority to attest the reality of its subject, than any other idea which common experience may suggest. If "the knowledge of God

* Instinct means a propensity thrust into the mind, impelling it to do what it does, without the intervention of reason, without instruction, without experience, and still with certainty in its results.

be the most natural discovery of human reason,"* then it is fair to ask, how it has happened that reason has drawn such diverse opinions respecting him? We can understand how such knowledge may be perverted after being derived from some primitive source, but we do not see why, if the natural powers of man are capable of discovering a supernatural fact, they should be so dissimilar in their results, and therefore, we do not concede that the knowledge of God is a discovery of human reason. Deism might satisfy itself with such an apparent plausibility, but where is the history — the facts on which, if true, it ought to be founded? They cannot be produced. The history and facts, which are available upon this subject, all go to show that primeval society did not acquire their knowledge of God through that means. An idea of the supernatural could not have sprung out of the merely natural. The notion of untutored men originating a conception, which, according to Deism, implies an idea of abstract wisdom in its infinitude and eternity, is a mere hypothesis. Feelings of joy in prosperity, and of sadness in affliction, never could have suggested the knowledge of God's existence. Nor can it be shown, that reasoning from the phenomena of the external world ever conducted to such a result. It is true, that marks of extraordinary wisdom and power abound in every object by which we are surrounded. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work," (Psalm xix. 1;) and "the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." (Rom. i. 20.) Rational creatures, who will reflect upon these facts, may confirm therefrom, a belief in the Divine existence, after the idea has been suggested to them,† but there is no satisfactory evidence to show, that the minds of the first men spontaneously took this course, and of themselves originated that thought. The idea existed in the human mind long before men were conducted to those evidences of its reality, which arise out of a contemplation of nature. This process of induction was posterior to Revelation, for no time can be pointed out in the history of humanity, in which a Revelation was not extant, and every one knows that philosophy attained no figure during the infancy of society. Natural Theology took its rise when revealed theology began to decline; it therefore, did not originate the knowledge of any spiritual truths, but simply provided arguments to arrest their downward progress. Natural

* The assertion of Locke, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Book i., chap. 4 and 17.

† Derham's *Physico-Theology*, Paley's *Natural Theology*, and all *The Bridgewater Treatises* are constructed on this idea.

theology is an eminently useful branch of learning, but it has always been pursued with a knowledge of God in the mind of the student, and never otherwise. Nor has it ever conduced to the establishment of any definite idea respecting him. Philosophy may confirm in our minds the idea of God's existence, but it cannot teach us what he is, — where he is to be found, or how we ought to think concerning him ; for instruction in these things, like the origin of the idea itself, it is necessary that a Revelation from him should be provided.

We say that the knowledge of God could not have been attained without a Revelation, because it is to be considered as the idea of a spiritual Being superior to nature, and existing in a discrete degree above or beyond it, and to whom there is no bridge from nature to convey us. This is evident. For although the phenomena of the universe demonstrate the existence of a Maker, who is distinguished by astounding benevolence and wisdom, yet what is to hinder reason from asking "who made him?" or from repeating a similar query *in infinitum*? Nature does not tell us where to stop in such a process of investigation, and the Scriptures ask "canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job xi. 7.) Children who are properly told that God made all things, will ask who made God. Neither philosophy nor simplicity detects the stopping-place. A final cause is not discoverable by such a course of inquiries. It can be disclosed to man only by the Being who is this final cause. Reason may admit the idea of such a cause after it has been suggested, but reasonings do not, cannot conduct us to it. This is a defect in natural theology, which nothing but a Revelation can satisfactorily remove. We may be capable of measuring the distances and magnitude of the stars ; of unfolding the laws and revolutions of the planetary worlds, with all the mathematics which belong to astronomical science ; we may know with accuracy, geological phenomena, the contents of the earth's respective strata, and be qualified for calculating its epochs with the utmost exactitude ; we may be acquainted with electricity, in all its remarkable operations, and with zoölogy and botany in all their interesting phases ; in short, we may know, with the greatest precision, the whole round of the physical sciences, and yet this will not unravel any one of the great secrets of spiritual existence.* Man cannot acquire spiritual truths from the study of

* This is the fact intended to be conveyed by the Lord's declaration, — "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Matt. xix. 24. By the rich man are signified those who abound in the knowledges of philosophy and science ; and by its being easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for such to enter into the kingdom of God, is meant, that it is impossible

natural philosophy and science. What spiritual truth was ever so learned? Who was the individual so educated? Alas! history is silent upon this point, though biography might show that such learning has not unfrequently been associated with ignorance and denial of all spiritual existence.* The philosopher who tries to find out God by an investigation of nature, is like the anatomist who attempted to discover the soul by a dissection of the body. By such a process of inquiry men may advance from a knowledge of the crass to the purer parts of nature; they may ascend out of the obvious into an acquaintance with much subtle phenomena and operation; but when they remember that it is spirituality of which they are in search, they must see that such a process of investigation is not capable of discovering it.

To meet the defect of natural theology above alluded to, it is sometimes said that the argument does not proceed in *infinitum*, because then there would be no final cause.† Exactly so! but what is to stop the argument? Reason, which is continually inquiring for causes, and attempting the resolution of effects, does not arrive at a final cause by that logical sequence with which the argument is commenced. And here the atheist takes his stand. He is properly told that God is the primary cause, and referred to the surprising forms into which matter is arranged, and the adjustment of them to amazing ends. But he inquires, whence came matter? It may be said, that the same power and intelligence which could so wonderfully arrange it, could also produce it. To this he replies, "that is assertion, give me some other reason: analogy seems to be against it; man can arrange matter into numerous forms, and display a large amount of intellectual ingenuity in the adaptation of it to certain ends, but he cannot originate an atom."‡ True, he cannot; but can the atoms originate themselves? It is admitted that the idea of

for those with such knowledge merely, to learn the spiritual things of heaven and the Church: for by the "camel" in a spiritual sense, is denoted the scientific principle of knowledge, and by "the eye of a needle" spiritual truth. — *Treatise on Heaven and Hell*, n. 365.

* It is very commonly acknowledged that the learned in philosophical science merely, have less belief in spiritual things, and see Divine truth less plainly than the simple. Hence, also, Jesus said "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." Luke x. 21. By the wise and prudent were meant the scribes and pharisees, who were the learned of the Jewish nation; and by babes are denoted those who are "taught of God."

† Mr. Bowes, in a *Discussion at Bradford on Christianity and Infidelity*. Printed 1850.

‡ The so-called sages of antiquity conceived, that the intelligence which they beheld in the forms of matter, and matter itself, were eternal. *Democ-*

there being no time, no space, no matter, is not conceivable ; but then it is insisted, that a notion of their self-existence is no better circumstanced. Moreover, something must have existed from eternity ; non-existence is no more conceivable than something arising out of nothing. The question therefore, is, what is that something ? is it matter, or is it something above matter, which we denominate God ? The atheist says, that the idea of an uncaused God is no more intelligible to him than the idea of uncaused matter.* This may be so, but it does not follow, that one of those propositions is not more reasonable than the other. Surely the proposition of a self-existing mind strikes the understanding as a much more acceptable idea than the notion of self-existing matter. Besides, no argument can be adduced to prove that uncaused mind does not exist, whereas much may be said to show, that such an idea is not predicable of matter. Matter is always in motion, it must have a mover ; a large proportion of its solid, liquid, and aeriform substances are compounds, they must have had a compounder ; it reveals the existence of intelligence and design in its smallest, as well as in its greatest parts, hence they must have had an intelligent designer ; so that the mover, compounder, and designer must have existed prior to any of the diversified aspects under which matter is now known. Thus there is impressed upon the conditions of matter, not only evidence of the existence of a prior being but likewise of something that is superior to it ; for, surely, the mind which has impressed itself upon matter, is more eminent than the matter in which the impression was displayed. If then, mind must have existed before matter, and is superior to it, it is plain that the notion of the self-existence of matter is a worthless conjecture.

But although the "natural logic" of Deism can put Atheism to silence, it makes but little progress in determining any clear idea concerning God, or the origin of our knowledge respecting

ritus held that an infinite number of atoms existed from eternity, and that each was really distinct from the other, while all were essentially endowed with an *active principle*. *Epicurus* made an alteration in this doctrine, by insisting that the atoms were nothing but atoms, having no sort of spiritual nature in them, and that it was by a fortuitous concurrence of these, that the worlds and animated beings existed ; yea, that souls, and the gods themselves were thus originated. This seems absurd enough, yet, what else can be expected from those among whom the light of ancient Revelation had so nearly gone out ? *Anaxagoras*, however, taught that an *intelligent mind* is the first principle of all things, and said that this alone, of all things, is simple and compounded ; and that this mind, which is the *first principle*, put *eternal* matter in motion, and formed the world by the choice of homogeneities. These ancients seem to have felt no difficulty in admitting the existence of two eternal things, which were dissimilar in their natures, though with us, the idea of one eternal, necessarily excludes the idea of another.

* Mr. Holyoake, in a *Discussion, at Bradford, on Christianity and Infidelity*. Printed 1850.

his existence. It cannot reach a first cause. "The human mind cannot construct a bridge from the finite to the infinite;" it regards what it discovers of intelligence in creation, as a mere abstraction, denies to it embodiment, and finds it only in connection with something that is natural. Hence arose the notion of "a plastic nature," held by some of the Greek philosophers, and likewise the "pantheism" of more modern times.* The above difficulties which natural theology experiences with this question, together with the absurd consequences into which it has led those, who have either rejected the light of Revelation, or have not been aided by it, show that it is not capable of having produced the idea of God, into the origination of which we are inquiring; and therefore, we are compelled to seek information upon this point from another source.

Thirdly. — We now come to the Christian view of the subject. It was before observed, that some Christians have no very definite opinion respecting it. The orthodox say "although the light of nature, and the works of creation and Providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable, yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore, it has pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself." (Confession of Faith, agreed upon at Westminster.) This affords but little information upon the origin of the idea of God's existence; it leaves it to be inferred, that the light of nature might have furnished it, though not with the clearness which is required for the purpose of salvation. Now, if the light of nature had communicated to man his first idea of God's existence, upon what principle does it withhold the knowledge requisite for this purpose? This it will be difficult to answer. But as the light of nature does not teach us what is necessary for salvation, we hold that it did not unfold to us the Being of him who saves. It seems plain to us, that the knowledge of God's existence must have originally sprung out of his Revelation of the fact to man. No other view can adequately account for its antiquity, its universality, or permanence. In

* The "Plastic nature" of the ancients was of two sorts. One party considered the universe as a kind of animal, endowed with a sensitive, or rational life, which governed and ordered the whole. The other maintained that the universe was not an animal, but a sort of vegetable, endowed with a spermatie nature, and branching out its respective parts with method, but without understanding or sense. *Cudworth's Intellectual System of the Universe*, pp. 193, 194. "Pantheism" supposes that nothing but God exists; that the substance of every thing is the substance of God, thus, that the universe is God. This notion was very common among the Greek philosophers. Hobbes has maintained it in England, Spinoza in Spain, and Behmen in Germany, each, however, with some conceits peculiar to himself.

discussing this opinion it will be useful, in the first place, to show what the existence of an idea involves.

Now experience teaches, that man is born without any knowledge at all. The speculations and disputes which once existed on the subject of connate ideas, have passed away as mere absurdities.* That which is connate with man is the faculty of acquiring ideas, together with an inclination to love some of the objects of them. Ideas of natural things enter into the mind by means of impressions made upon it from without; and the original idea of any spiritual thing must have been conceived in the mind, by means of an influence acting upon it from within; after which it might have been propagated by teaching. Thus all our ideas arise out of impressions made upon this faculty, so that wheresoever there is an idea, it must have originally been derived from the object of it. An idea of nothing cannot exist; all ideas therefore, imply the existence of something, and that they are derived by us from their relative objects. The existence of the idea of a house is a proof that the house existed.† It is the same with all other ideas, whether they are acquired by us through outer sensation or inner perception. The ideas which arise from reflection and reason, are all traceable to the same source, namely, to impressions made upon the mind by actually existing objects.

All ideas which are thoroughly simple, are genuinely true. Falsehood is only predicable of complex ideas; and the causes of it may be traced to the fallacy of the senses, obscurity of apprehension, ignorance, or wilful perversion; but even the falsehoods into which complex ideas may be woven, could not have existed independently of truth — that is, of some truth. Take, for instance, the idea of a centaur or a sphinx. They both suggest complex ideas, which, as such, have no reality; but this is not the case with those respective parts of which mythologists have composed them. There are such things as the body of a horse, and the head, arms, and trunk of a man; also the body of a lion, and the face of a woman, and from these, ideas of realities have been derived; the false ideas associated with them, arise out of that combination which the imagination has assigned to them. Imagination does not originate our substantive ideas, it only arranges and disposes them in a way in which they never existed. Every simple idea has arisen out of a reality, and it is

*. The notion that man is born with certain connate ideas, was not uncommon up to the end of the seventeenth century. Locke, in his *Essay concerning the Human Understanding*, Book i., chap. 4, § 19, 20, with other writers upon the same subject since his time, have dissipated the conceit.

† Descartes attempted the proof of his own existence upon this principle, hence his enthymeme, — *Cogito, ergo sum*.

nothing but certain perversions of these which constitute falsehood. That which is an object of simple thought, exists independently of the thought, whether it relates to the outer world or to our inner life.

Now the idea of God exists; this, then, upon the principle laid down, is a proof that God exists. No man is conscious of having originated this idea in himself. All now know that it is the result of instruction; there must, then, have been a first instructor. There may be, there doubtless is, an internal influence operating upon the mind of every one, inclining it to the favorable reception of the idea when it is presented; still, without the presentation of some sort of knowledge respecting it, that influence could have no ground on which to act. But our inquiry relates to the primeval source of the idea. This can be accounted for upon no other principle, than that of God having revealed himself to the human mind. It could not have existed without his existence, and being an idea of the supernatural beyond the reach of our senses, it seems plain that we could not have acquired it, if he had not primarily furnished the information.

Reason may, if it be so disposed, readily see that the natural cannot communicate to us an idea of the supernatural, such as God is. He, not being material, could not be discovered by the bodily senses of men, and that he is past finding out by the greatest exertions of their mental faculties, is the testification of all history. As, then, the idea of his existence has come into the world, it seems plain that it was produced by means of Revelation. We, of course, do not mean to say that that Revelation was the Bible, because the idea had prevailed for many ages before that production was commenced. One object of that work was, among others, to restore the idea which at that time had been extensively perverted, and to provide for it a more enduring record. Other written Revelations preceded those of Moses; he distinctly cites from two of them; * he also informs us that before these, there were other communications made to the first men, and so assures us that the primeval idea of God was the result of Revelation. (See the early chapters of Genesis.) The first portions of the Bible contain a history of the religious condition of the earliest inhabitants of the world; from thence we learn that God made himself known to them, and that they acknowledged his existence. These facts are conspicuous,

* Numbers xxi., 14, 27. All the revelations which have been made, have been distinguished by the same essential truths; the differences consist in the forms in which they have been expressed, and these forms have been regulated by the states of the people for whom they were provided. More on this subject may be seen in the fourth chapter.

notwithstanding the highly figurative character of the narrative. Immediately after the creation of man, God is represented to have spoken to him. This, of course, was Revelation. Several instances of a similar nature are afterwards recorded. Thus the oldest history extant, apart from the fact of its being itself a Revelation, declares that the first idea which man had of God's existence, was communicated from Him. Doubtless, one of the conditions for the original reception of such an idea, must have been a state of innocence and excellence on the part of man: and the prevalence of such a condition is indicated by the tradition of the whole civilized world, — spoken of by the poets as the Golden Age, — and treated of in the Scriptures as the blessings of Eden. Primitive men, being in the image and likeness of God, would be eminently fitted for the admission of an interior knowledge of Him, and from Him. We cannot suppose that this knowledge was communicated to man through an external or material medium. The uncorrupt condition of his spirit would qualify him for the open vision of spiritual things, and therefore we conclude, that the idea was formed upon the interiors of the minds of the first men, by the real object of it presenting himself in a suitable way to their spiritual sight.* And this Revelation was not a mere indication that a Divine Being existed, but the Revelation of a distinct idea respecting him — an idea by which he could be thought of, and thus intellectually approached in worship. So long as man's excellence continued, so long would this idea of God remain, but it would necessarily decline in brightness as he fell from that condition. As the eye grew dim, the object of sight became less distinct, and in process of time, the imagination surrounded the original simple idea of a personal God with obscurity; it was afterwards so perverted, that scarcely any intellectual idea upon the point remained with men, at the commencement of the Scriptures now extant. Those documents were provided for the purpose of reviving and perpetuating that knowledge.

But the knowledge of God's existence having been introduced to the world, was not to be lost, because men had chosen to reject the specific idea with which it was originally accompanied. Although corruptions shut up their spiritual minds, so that they could no longer receive instruction concerning Divine things by an internal way, there is no reason for supposing that they suddenly forgot all the spiritual truth that they had learned.

* Dr. Pye Smith remarks, that "the Deity was pleased to manifest himself to the newly-formed and favored creatures, in ways of most condescending goodness and wisdom, assuming probably a splendid human form, and communicated with them in ways, and to an extent of the most wise and benevolent purposes." — *Scripture and Geology*, page 252.

Criminal conduct induces us to neglect the lessons of wisdom, but it does not at once obliterate them from our remembrance. The knowledge of God's existence which had been introduced by Revelation, was afterwards taught, so that it would be retained in the memories of the first delinquents, who also would communicate it to their descendants, and thus it was propagated for several generations. These teachings however, continued to depart more and more from their primitive accuracy, and at length they were entirely corrupted.

This was the condition of the world at the period of the flood; the narrative of which is not to be understood as a universal inundation of water, but as an allegorical history of the inflowing of falsehood upon the human mind, and causing therein the destruction of spiritual truths. (See the Author's *Antediluvian History and Narrative of the Flood*.) But among the first intimations for the restoration of religion among the survivors of that catastrophe, is that of God making a revelation of himself. This took place with Noah and his sons, and God established a covenant with them.* The first result of this revelation was the restoration of a just idea of God; this, with some few variations and exceptions, appears to have retained its influence with men, up to the period of the building of Babel, when differences of sentiment arose respecting it, which afterwards dispersed the people. They carried with them into various portions of the earth, some idea of God, and by them it was propagated among their descendants. To this circumstance is to be ascribed that general idea of God's existence which is known to prevail even among those whom the teachings of the Scriptures have not reached, so that such knowledge has actually sprung from Revelation as its common origin. Subsequent communications respecting this idea were made to Abraham and his immediate posterity; to Moses also, with the prophets and others; and from these, Jewish and Christian society have been furnished with that idea of the Supreme Being, which their respective conditions have required. What this idea is, will be shown in a subsequent chapter. Our object here is chiefly to trace the origin of the idea that a God *exists*, up to his Revelation. It has never been pretended that philosophy could furnish us with any *idea* respecting his *individuality*. When the original information upon this point had dwindled down to the mere notion of God's existence, the scriptures were successively provided to effect its restoration.

* It is worthy of remark, that the first command to Adam, and to Noah after the flood, is couched in the same terms, namely, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth," Gen. i. 28; ix. 1. By being fruitful is signified, increase in the good things of charity, and by multiplying, is denoted the enlargement of knowledge respecting faith; in the former case, however, *in the celestial*, and the latter in the *spiritual* condition of man.

Hence it is historically certain, that all the ideas concerning God which have ever existed in the world, and which may still prevail among any portion of its inhabitants, must have originally sprung from God having at different times revealed himself to men; not that the perversions came from Him, but that they prove there was some primary truth to pervert.

But while this must be admitted, and while it is conceded that the idea, since its first promulgation, has been propagated by means of instruction, more or less imperfect, the perpetuation of it has been assisted by another means. The phenomena of its continuance and universality cannot be accounted for on the ground of mere teaching. This human effort has been assisted by a Divine provision. There has always been an influx from God into the souls of men inducing them to receive favorably such idea. Without this influx, it must have passed away, as many other knowledges have, in every condition of society. That much information has perished is well known. We are no longer acquainted with many scientific appliances of the ancients; and it is evident, that with the cessation of a superior state of man, many spiritual truths have, in the course of ages, been forgotten. There is a spiritual influx into every truth which man receives, inclining him to cherish and preserve it; but then it is more or less connected with God, as the truth is more or less important to the welfare of our race; and hence it is more or less liable to pass away. But the idea of God's existence includes the highest truth, and is associated with the holiest interests of men; it therefore has been receptive of the most immediate influx from Him; hence it has remained in the world, since the first hour it was introduced to the first man, sustaining indeed a variety of corruptions, but still existing.

The preservation of this idea is requisite to the continuation of man. If it were entirely to pass away, the medium whereby his spiritual life is sustained would be removed. Thus, universal atheism would extinguish humanity. The acknowledgment of God by man, affords a sort of common or general receptacle for the Divine in the natural world, and so it is one of the mediums, by which a conjunction is preserved between the Creator and the creature. How evident is this! Look at the consequences which have come upon some ancient nations, who had practically denied Him. How have the people perished! The local geography which they occupied is scarcely known to modern times. How many fruitful lands, once the habitation of a busy and extensive population, have been turned into barrenness, and now exhibit little else than the frightful aspects of dread and desolation! Savage life is barbarous in proportion to the defectibility of this idea; and civil life has

always been high or low, as the knowledge of God has been pure or otherwise. It has, however, in some shape, always been preserved in the world; and the influx spoken of above, is one of the mediums by which this has been accomplished.

That there is such an influx is well known. The Scriptures teach it and experience confirms it. We are instructed that man "can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven;" (John iii. 27 :) also, that "every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights;" (James i. 17 :) we know that the sun rises on the evil as well as on the good, and that the rain descendeth on the just and on the unjust, (Matt. v. 45 :) and the Lord refers to these facts, because they represent the influence of Divine love and wisdom operating upon universal man. Every one feels that there is an influx of the soul into the body, when the soul operates upon the body and determines it to any particular acts. And they who will reflect upon the circumstance, that sentiments and feelings are sometimes suddenly induced upon the mind, not only without any effort on its part, but even when it is turned in an opposite direction, must acknowledge that there is a spiritual influx into the soul. And when it is further considered that man does not live of himself, but from God who is the only life, (Acts xvii. 28 :) it becomes evident that there is an influx of life proceeding from Him, entering first into the souls of men, then into their affections and thoughts, and thence into the senses, speech, and actions of the body, because these are the subjects of life in successive order. Thus the order of influx is for the superior to flow into the inferior; and consequently, for God, who is the Supreme Spirit, to cause an influx of Himself into the human soul, from the soul into the mind, and from the mind into the organs which constitute the body.

To reject this first step in the series of influx, is like a person who denies the fruit to have originated with the seed, and traces its source no farther back than the root of the tree. But this is a great omission in such an inquiry; for how evident is it, that the soul does not live of itself, and how plain is the statement, "that the Lord God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul." (Gen. ii. 7.) This not only states that the living principle of the soul is life influent from God, but also, that it is accompanied with an ability to perceive what is good and true, whensoever they are adequately presented to the thought. The soul, being the highest of all created spiritual substances, in receiving its life immediately from God, must needs be impressed with a sentiment inclining men to believe in his existence as the first of all spiritual truths. Still, this impression can only cause itself to be felt, as

the mind into which it flows is in possession of some knowledge, more or less, in correspondence with itself. That which is not in such correspondence alters the influx; it being a universal law, that an alteration in the recipient form must cause some change in the influx it receives. Thus there is a common influx of light into all the objects of nature, but every object changes the character of light according to its respective contexture. It shines alike upon the chalk and the diamond, but owing to the different structure of these substances, it is opaque in one and brilliant in the other; and consequently, the influx which man receives, inclining him to favor a belief in the Divine existence, is modified by the nature of the instruction to which the mind has previously been subjected. Man is not taught by influx, but when any truth is presented to his mind by teachings from without, it is always ready to present itself for admission, and to flow into it as its appropriate vessel, giving him a perception that it is so. It is from this phenomenon that men are enabled to perceive that certain things are true, even though they may not always, or at once, be capable of reasoning out the fact. How frequently do we recognize the truth of certain sentiments, the moment they are presented to the thought? Every one knows that there is something about truth, which enables the mind to commence a familiarity with it at first sight. Most persons have experienced this in conversation, and when listening to more formal discourses. Now that *something* is this influx from God into the human soul, of which we have been speaking. It is always ready from within to lay hold, as it were, of those sentiments which are presented from without, and so to procure for them an abiding-place in man. Hence it has been provided, that the knowledge of God's existence should be preserved. It is the first and fundamental truth connected with man's existence, admissive of the purest and strongest influx, and therefore, it is an idea which can never perish.

This knowledge, since it was first revealed, has been universally taught — taught, indeed, in numerous cases with strange additions and marvellous omissions — but still the idea of a Supreme existence has underlain them all. This having once been introduced to the human mind, and afterwards continued by external teaching, has been met therein by a spiritual influx inspiring the idea with a living character, and so providing for the continuation of the teaching, by perpetuating the belief. It is therefore maintained by a kind of perpetual inspiration in individual men; which also proves the spirituality of their own nature, since, without it, the idea of God's existence could not have been learned, nor that influx received, which has contributed to its preservation.

CHAPTER III.

THE SOUL OF MAN A SPIRITUAL BODY, IN THE HUMAN FORM, GIFTED WITH IMMORTALITY.

ARGUMENT. Knowledge of the soul's existence, the result of Revelation. The acknowledgment of the soul, inseparable from Religion. Extant among those to whom the Bible is unknown. The source of it. The efforts of the Greek philosophers to know something of the soul. The Hebrew writings on the subject. Obscurity of Christian teaching respecting it. The Scriptures the safe and proper guide to such knowledge. Distinction between man and beast, intimated in certain statements of the Lord. The soul represented to be a distinct existence from the body. Sensualism experiences difficulty with this idea. Conjectures respecting the soul and its dwelling-place in the natural body. Christian materialists. Examination of their arguments: shown to be founded in error. Inquiry, what is life? God "the life," the giver of all life. The life of all forms, the same in its origin; illustrated. The more perfect the form, the more elevated the life. The stationary nature of instinctive life, the changeableness of rational life. Man the most perfect form, and the recipient of the most perfect degree of life. Discrete and continuous degrees of life. The difference between man and animals at birth, and of what it is the sign. An essential distinction between the degrees of human and animal life, with illustrations. Man a thinking being, with a spiritual organism, which the beasts have not. The apostle's statement "there is a spiritual body." The spiritual body, the human soul. The soul not life, but a recipient of life from God. Scripture illustrations. The soul, as a human entity, in the human form. Natural death does not impair it. The scriptures show that the soul lives after the death of the body. The source of ancient doctrines on the subject, so far as they approximate to the truth. The sentiments of Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, and others. The Christian fathers, who agree with some of the Greek philosophers. Scripture evidences. Illustrations derived from certain sensations experienced by those who have lost a limb by amputation, or otherwise. Inquiry, what is spirit? with a definition. Affection and thought, as spiritual things, must have a spiritual organism through which to convey themselves into the physical structures; experimental illustrations. Suggestions respecting the development of the spiritual body into the human form, with illustrations. Testimony of the Scripture that the soul is in the human form. The soul of man, man, and the soul of woman, woman. Brief summary respecting the soul's existence. Its immortality. Evidences from the dread of annihilation, from its spirituality, and from there being no elements in nature to injure it. Good men do not dread death. Arguments from man, as the recipient of spiritual life; from the soul, being a special creation for its reception; from the capabilities of the will and understanding. Why beasts are not immortal. The great argument for man's immortality, founded on his ability to know God, and thence to love him.

As the knowledge of God was originally communicated to us by Revelation, so all our distinct information respecting the human soul, has descended to us from the same source. "Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," (2 Tim. i. 10,) while philosophy and experience afford collateral proofs concerning their existence and condition.

The Scriptures clearly inform us, that man was made "a living soul." (Gen. ii. 7.) This description characterized no other subject of animated nature; it is the human peculiarity, out of which arises man's dominion in the earth. They likewise tell us that this soul "shall never die." (John xi. 25, 26; Matt. x. 28; Mark ix. 43-48.) All religion is intimately associated with this fact; without this, it could have no proper subject to influence by its encouragements, or to awe by its warnings. Religion, in some shape, has existed in all times, with most people; there has, therefore, always been in the world a recognition concerning the soul and its continuation beyond the present scene of its existence. This has been observed among people whom the Bible has not reached. With them it must have been a traditional sentiment, preserved since the dispersion of mankind, to whom a Revelation had been given, and from some of whom, such people must have descended.*

Great efforts have been made by civilized nations, to whom the Bible has been unknown, to ascertain something clear and satisfactory upon this subject. This is very conspicuous from the writings of the Greek philosophers and their Latin imitators. The former exerted a large amount of intellectual power upon this investigation, and evinced, perhaps, as deep an insight into certain phenomenal evidences, as, under their circumstances, it was possible to possess, and yet they hardly raised the idea out of that conjecture, which an imperfect tradition respecting the soul's existence, had preserved among them; and which, we learn from the Bible, must have been originally derived from the Revelation which had announced the existence of God. Socrates and Plato had some guesses on the subject, and Cicero has mentioned an hypothesis;† but these being guided by a very feeble light from above, were necessarily indeterminate and vague. But even these notions, defective as they were, have been thought by some to have arisen either out of an acquaintance with the Hebrew writings, or from an intercourse with some of the Jewish people. But this opinion rests on very slender evidence. Besides, the Jews themselves, notwithstanding they possessed an acknowledged Revelation, do not appear to have had any very clear idea about the soul.‡ This is evident,

* See Gen. ix. x. and xi. In the dispersion of mankind from Babel, it appears they migrated eastward, to Media; northward, to the mountains of Caucasus; southward, to Ethiopia; and westward, to Lybia and Greece, including Macedonia. — *Universal History*, vol. i. p. 373.

† Cicero, in his work on *Divination*, lib. i. chap. 51, introduces his brother, Quintus, defending the stoical doctrine on man, and without expressing any dissent therefrom, makes him say, "Our mind, because it has existed from all eternity, and conversed with numerous other minds, seeth all things that are in nature."

‡ See Warburton's *Divine Legation of Moses*. Dr. Barrow observes, "that

from the case of the Sadducees, a large and powerful sect, who said "that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit;" (Acts xxiii. 8;) a negation which does not appear to have been condemned by any public censure of the Jewish church. It is true, that "the Pharisees confessed both," and that they, also, were a numerous and influential body; still this confession seems not to have been accompanied with any correct or decisive sentiments; because, as the apostle informs us, these things were brought to light through the Gospel.

It is admitted, upon all hands, that the subject of the soul is not prominently treated of in the letter of the writings peculiarly Jewish. Still the idea of its existence and spiritual nature is declared, and this forms, as it were, the substratum of all the circumstances which are related. It is, then, not to be presumed, that Moses and the prophets do not contain any thing but obscure hints upon this subject, but that the people had only an imperfect apprehension of their meaning.

Even Christians, with the additional light afforded them by the Gospel, have not been always clear and happy in their doctrines on this subject.* The existence and immortality of the

as to the evident discovery concerning the immortality of man's soul, or the future state, even the gentile theology, &c., seems to have outgone the Jewish. The Pagan priests more expressly taught, more frequently inculcated arguments drawn from thence, than the Hebrew prophets." Vol. 2, sermon 15. The last observation respecting the paucity of teaching upon this subject, by the Hebrew prophets, arose out of an imperfect acquaintance with the figurative style, in which these, and all other spiritual matters are treated by the inspired penmen. — Consult Noble's *Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures*, and Madeley on the *Science of Correspondences*.

* Dr. J. L. Mosheim, in his notes to Dr. Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, says, that not one of the Christian fathers entertained the same opinion on the nature of the soul, as the majority of Christians do at the present day, viz., that it is perfectly simple, and entirely destitute of all body, figure, form, and extension. On the contrary, they all acknowledged it to contain something corporeal, although of a different kind and nature from the bodies of this mortal sphere. But yet they were divided into two opinions. Those who followed Plato and the Platonists, such as Clement, Origen, and their disciples, adopted the Platonic doctrine respecting the soul. Others, such as Tertullian, Arnobius, Methodius, and several more, condemn the Platonic doctrine for inculcating that the soul is a nature most simple in itself, and devoid of all concretion. Even those who suppose the soul to be body, are not of one and the same opinion. Some attach no meaning to the word body, when used in connection with the soul, and these differ least of all from the modern opinion concerning it. Several, among whom was Arnobius, suppose, that the soul is, by no means, immortal, but capable of dissolution and extinction. They generally agreed that souls were of an intermediate nature, that is, can perish, and on the other hand, if God so wills, can become immortal; that the souls of those who have embraced the Christian doctrine are rescued from the peril of mortality by baptism, or some other means: but that the souls of those who reject the discipline of Christ, remain mortal, and being sent to the abodes of the shades, are there

soul are commonly acknowledged; but what it is, — how we are to think of it, — and why it is immortal, — are questions, concerning which, very little decisive information is taught, nor is any thing said in the “articles” or general “catechisms” of the churches, by which these inquiries may be answered. If any clear opinions are held upon these points, they exist in obscurity among the learned; since it is well known that the populace have long regarded such particulars as suggesting a dark problem in human nature requiring elucidation.

Now the Scriptures are the only source of any satisfactory information upon these subjects. Philosophy may be useful in the production of collateral testimonies, but it is safe in such matters, only when guided by the light of Revelation. He who made man, knoweth what is in him, and he alone is fully capable of telling us about it. He has informed us that we are created in the image of God, (Gen. i. 27;) and, by the Psalmist, he has further stated that we are made a little lower than the angels, i. e., *Elohim*, GOD. (Psalm viii. 5.) Now, “God,” we are distinctly told, “is a spirit;” (John iv. 24;) man, then, to be an image of this spirit, must have a spiritual nature, still distinct from God, because created in “a lower” or inferior sphere. This spiritual nature of man the Scriptures call his *soul*; they also inform us that it lives by means of a life breathed into it from God. (Gen. ii. 7.) These facts are declared of no other being. He exists differently from all other creatures, and is superior to them. The Lord Jesus Christ intimated this fact when he inquired, “how much is a man better than a sheep.” (Matt. xii. 12.) This interrogatory was designed to induce in us a course of reflection, which should enable us to comprehend the distinction between responsible and irresponsible existences. He likewise brought the subject in a similar way, under our notice, on two or three other occasions. In his sermon upon the mount he said, “Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: are ye not much better than they?” (Matt. vi. 26.) Here the question is put — are we not much better than they? And surely, he meant it to be inferred, that that, in which the superiority consists, was man’s spiritual nature. Again, the Lord said, “are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father; — fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” (Matt. x. 29, 31.) Here also, we have a plain declaration, that human nature is more valuable than animal life; and there can

tormented by fire till they are finally dissolved and annihilated. Dodwell revived this doctrine in England, during the last century. pp. 325, 326.

be no doubt, that the existence of the soul is pointed at, as the ground of it. Upon another occasion Jesus said, "consider the ravens,—which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" (Luke xii. 24.) In this, we are called upon to consider a certain class of animated beings, with a view to a better understanding of those spiritual characteristics, which separate humanity from the beast. It is also asked, "what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" clearly to intimate that its value is above all price; "for what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark viii. 36, 37.)

These statements of Revelation, supported as they are by our consciousness of possessing a living and thinking principle, render it unnecessary that we should, in this stage of the inquiry, multiply Scriptural proofs of its existence.

But another circumstance to be observed respecting it is, that the soul* is represented to us as a distinct existence from the body. The body is called dust; and, treating of its dissolution, it is said, "then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Ecclesiastes xii. 7.) The same distinction was reannounced by Jesus Christ, who said, "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." (Matt. x. 28.) The body, being material, will die, but men cannot kill the soul, because it is distinguished by another nature, and superior substance.†

These statements are commonly accepted as truths, because there is a willingness to admit the authority on which they rest; but still, a sort of sensualism prevents men from seeing the genuine nature of them. Various conjectures are entertained respecting the soul. It is conceded on all hands, to be a vital principle, to which, however, no very definite idea is attached; this

* Although it will be readily understood, that we employ the term *soul*, to denote that living, rational, and spiritual substance in man, which distinguishes him from the brute, yet the Scriptures employ the term with seven varieties of this general signification, viz.: 1, Man in general.—2, The life of the body.—3, The life of the spirit.—4, The faculty of the understanding.—5, The Divine truth.—6, Spiritual life.—7, Life in general. See the *Apocalypse Explained*, n. 750. Notwithstanding the term is made use of with these variations in its signification, it will be observed that there is a brotherhood among them, and that the idea of spiritual life includes them all. It is the difference in the subject treated of, which required the word to be used with those shades of distinctive meaning.

† "In order to be convinced that the soul must be a substance, let any one try to think of a thing which is not a substance, and he will immediately begin to think of nothing! It is, indeed, a self-evident truth, that whatsoever exists must be a substance."—Rev. W. Mason on *What is the Human Soul?* p. 11.

is evident from the suppositions which have been stated respecting its dwelling-place. Some maintain that it exists in the brains, because they are observed to be sources of thought. Others have guessed that its habitation is the heart, and thence the blood, because it is said, the heart, by the blood, rules the whole body : also, because the heart is sometimes spoken of in the Scriptures in connection with the soul, as where it is written "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy *heart* and with all thy *soul* : " (Matt. xxii. 37 ;) and likewise because it is expressly said, that "the life of the flesh is the blood." (Lev. xvii. 11, 14.) Others conceive that the soul is a pure somewhat, which may be likened to ether, air, or wind ; and the reasons assigned for this opinion are grounded on the circumstance of its being said, from observation, that when man dies, he gives up his breath or spirit ; — thus a kind of vapor, animated by a principle of thinking life. (*Conjugal Love*, n. 315.) Other hypotheses may be discovered by a search into the literature of this subject ; among the most conspicuous of which is that of the materialists ; and with them are to be found many receivers and defenders of certain views of the Christian system. They, seeing insuperable difficulties connected both with the ancient philosophies and the generality of Christian speculations, have come to the conclusion, that what is called the soul is not an immaterial thing, and that the mental phenomena from which it has been inferred, are solely the results of bodily organization ; and yet they profess to believe in the immortality of man, and a future state, upon the authority of the Scriptures.*

The hypothesis respecting its residence in the head, the heart, or the blood, affords no information as to its nature and quality. What can we know of the character of a being, by the mere discovery of its dwelling-place ? But anatomical dissection has not made any discovery suggesting such a habitation. Supposing the soul to reside in some particular locality of the body, it could retain but a small share of human identity ; it would be round, or square, or some other figure, to which, in all probability, geometry has not given a name. If we would learn what the soul is, we must study its phenomena as presented to us in the living structure, and as it is spoken of in the Scriptures.

They who suppose the soul to be a sort of aerial or vapory

* De la Mettrie in France, with Hartley and Dr. Priestley in England, are remarkable, as writers, on this subject ; the latter in several works, but particularly in his *Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit*. Some of the statements of Dr. Paley have been thought to savor of the same doctrine. See Lord Brougham's *Discourse of Natural Theology*, pp. 54, 79. Notes. Lawrence in his *Lectures on the comparative Anatomy, Physiology, Zoology, and Natural History of Man*, insists upon the same view.

being, must needs regard it as some delicate refinement of atoms, and this is to assign to it the mere property of matter. They who hold such a view, assert that we know too little of matter to say that the soul is not some exceedingly subtle modification of it. (*Power of the Soul over the Body*, by Dr. Moore.) This is a begging of the question, for surely, we know enough of matter to maintain, that in every possible modification of it, it must still be matter, and in no case spirit. Matter, of itself, is dead and senseless. The circumstance of its sometimes existing in an insensible or intangible condition, does not endow it with the attribute of life. No atom in its individuality can be supposed to think and love; and, therefore, these things are not predicable of any aggregate of them. No number of unreflecting things can produce a thought. A multitude of nothings cannot originate a something.

The opinion which openly avows the soul to be material, is, of course, grounded in mere sensualism. Sensual men do not think interiorly from any spiritual light, but externally and merely in the extremes of their minds. They sometimes argue with ability and shrewdness; their thoughts are so near their speech that they are almost in it. But they reason on things, and confirm them from the fallacy of the senses, and so persuade and captivate the vulgar. Because they do not see the mind of man dissociated from his material organization, they conclude that it is not separable from it, or capable of existing without it. Doubtless the physical structure of the body is the medium through which the soul displays its being, but it by no means follows, that it is not of an entirely different nature. We do not confound the steam which moves an engine, with any part of the mechanism. It is never concluded that the hand which occupies the glove, is not an entirely distinct thing: why then should the soul, which animates the body, not be considered as an entirely different substance? It must be so! Bones and muscles do not think, and why should medullary substances? and if they do, how does it happen that it is only displayed in the human subject? Physiology cannot inform us; it shows that some inferior animals have brains, possessing the like mechanical and chemical properties as the human brain; also that they are alike as to absolute and relative dimensions, and yet they have never disclosed any thing *really* resembling the activities of the reasoning soul. Does not this prove, that the soul and medullary substances are heterogeneities, and that human affection and reason are properties of a distinct immaterial being?

It is asked, "where shall we find proofs of the mind's independence of the bodily structure?" (Lawrence's *Lectures on Man*,

p. 5.) We answer, there are no proofs of the mind's independence of a *bodily* structure, but that the phenomena of mind exhibit a variety of proofs, that it can exist separately from the material forms.* Mind is a result of the soul's existence, and not of physical organization, which is but a system of instruments, through which it displays its being here below.† This is evident, if we consider its origin. Matter does not live or think, of itself: how then can it produce thought, which is an emanation from life? By organization, it will be said: but what is it that organizes? We answer, life!—life is the primary and proximate cause of the human structure, and therefore it is evident, that the materialists' assumption of life and mind being caused by organization, is a physiological impossibility. We admit, indeed, that no one can think without an organ of thought; and also that all affections must have their appropriate structures, yet, it does not follow, that that organ, or those structures, are natural. We expect to be enabled to show, that there are spiritual forms inserted into the material ones, and existing in a discrete degree above them.

But the above unsatisfactory views concerning the soul, have been adverted to, chiefly with the intention of contrasting them with that doctrine respecting it, which we think the Scriptures disclose, and philosophy confirms. If that doctrine is true, they will need no other confutation than the proof of it.

Now, before we can know any thing accurately concerning the nature or quality of the soul, we must first ascertain by what it

* See Lord Brougham's *Discourse of Natural Theology*, sec. iii., and notes thereto: also Dr. Brown's "*Philosophy of the Human Mind*," pp. 453–470.

† Mr. Lawrence asks "Where is the mind of the fœtus? Where that of the child just born? Do we not see it actually built up, before our eyes, by the actions of the five external senses, and of the gradually developed internal faculties?"—*Lectures on Man*, p. 5. By "internal faculties" is here meant, the medullary organization. Now there is life under all these circumstances;—there is human life, there are, therefore, the rudimental forms of mind, which the action of the external senses may serve to develop, but not to create, as the inquiries are intended to insinuate. "The soul, or spiritual part of man, is from the father, and has its beginnings in the ovum of the mother, and is afterwards perfected in her womb, and is then encompassed with a tender body, and this of such a nature, that by it the soul is enabled to act suitably in the world into which it is born."—*Arcana Celestia*, n. 3570. A blow on the head does not "annihilate the mind," nor does it "decay as the body declines in old age," or cease when the body dies, as the above writer also intimates. Those circumstances only prove disarrangements in the physical structure. Man cannot prove that he sees in the natural world without an eye, yet how numerous and plain are the objects which his mind beholds. He cannot display his mind with an injured or decaying organization, but it does not follow that he has not all its light and sensibilities. How can the musician play skilfully upon an instrument that is unstrung?

lives; and this, in the first place, leads us to inquire, "what is life?"

Whatsoever we know of life is by means of its effects. We see that all animated nature lives, and we perceive that each object is individualized by some distinctive love. We are certain that not one of them can command the continuation of life for a moment, and that every one, after a limited time, passes away from the scenes of nature. Life, then, is plainly a principle by which all organized forms are built up, and through which its existence is displayed.

The first cause of this wonderful manifestation is, evidently, God. It is "in him we live, and move, and have our being," (Acts xvii. 28;) and therefore he said, "I am the life," and "because I live ye shall live also." (John xiv. 6, 19.) These Scriptural statements agree with the philosophical proposition, that life is one, and indivisible in its nature, and that in God it is sole-existent, self-existent, and primary. (*True Christian Religion*, No. 21.) The Divine life is identical with the Divine love; "God is love:" (1 John iv. 16:) hence, also, he is essential activity, and consequently the first moving power of whatsoever exists in universal nature. Life in God is a creating principle, and creation is its product. All things created by him are dependent upon him. There can be no existence without subsistence, and that, also, proceeds from God. These truths enable us to see that God is the self-existent life, and that the life of his creatures is a perpetual dependence upon Him. These things are further taught us by his own declarations, "Without me ye can do nothing;" (John xv. 5;) "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." (John iii. 27.)

But although life, in its origin, is one, and indivisible, we find that it is manifested in a great variety of forms. The life of angels, men, beasts, and vegetables, is, originally, the same.* As created forms, they indicate the presence of the Divine wisdom, but the secret source of their being is the Divine love, which is the Divine life.† These facts, at first sight, may seem to be mysterious; but the obscurity will be considerably abated, when we remember some of the analogies thereto, which are afforded by the discoveries of physical science.

Thus, the elemental substance called carbon, presents itself

* "Life, as modified by a vegetable organization, is vegetable life; as modified by an animal organization, it is animal life; as modified by man, it is human life;—in his natural body, natural life; and in his spiritual body, spiritual life;—and human life alone, when man is in his true order, perfectly corresponds with the Divine life."—Rev. W. Mason, on *What is the Human Soul?*

† See a very able and interesting sermon on *Life in its origin, gradations, forms, and issues*, by the Rev. Geo. Bush, M. A.

to us under a multitude of forms. It enters extensively into the composition of the rose and the violet, and indeed into the universal flora. It is the chief part of the pine, the oak, and all the trees of the forest ; of all leaves, grasses, and fruits. It also exists as an invisible matter in the air, and thus constitutes the food of plants ; and the hard and brilliant diamond is nothing but the same substance, under a different arrangement of its atoms.

Again, the elemental gases, known to the chemist under the names of oxygen and hydrogen, unite in certain proportions and constitute water. This becomes steam under the influence of heat ; while under a low temperature it displays itself in the beautiful forms of the snowflake, the six-sided prism of the hail-stone, and those solid and enormous masses of ice which render the northern regions of the world so desolate and inaccessible.

When, then, we see that the same essential physical substances can and do exist in a great variety of forms, we are better prepared to admit that the life of all animated nature is the same Divine life, modified by the forms through which it is displayed.

The next point to be noticed is, that the greater the perfection of created forms, the more elevated is the life which they are capable of displaying. Doubtless, the perfection of all created forms is Man. Being made in the image of God, he must be the highest form of the Divine creation, and therefore, be adapted to receive the highest principles of communicable life.

All the other forms of animated nature, maintain, according to their species, a uniformity in the use of the life which they receive ; man alone exhibits variety in the application of it. Animals have continued to hold all that was implanted in them by original creation. Their habits and their instincts are the same to-day as they were six thousand years ago. No intercourse between them improves their condition. No separation diminishes the powers which are proper to their being. The beaver erects his hut with the same instinctive intelligence, the bee collects her honey with the same industry and skill, as did their ancestors when they first began to work. How different is the case with man ! He has plainly departed from some primeval excellence, and since then how changeable has been his condition ! and how diversified his existence ! He improves and civilizes by association : he degenerates, and becomes barbaric by isolation. His habits have been various in every age ; they are so in every country, and almost in every house. These facts prove that the principle of life which has been communicated to man, is rendered, by some peculiarity in his structure, different from that of every other being. With the exception of man, the life of all animated nature is displayed as a stationary

principle: but the life of man is not so. In him it is admixtive of unlimited and continual developments. The expansive nature and capabilities of human life show, that it is exceedingly different in its quality from that which distinguishes animal being; and this difference, which we have before seen, as pointed out by the Scriptures, is a philosophical fact eminently suggestive of its imperishable nature.

But the ground of this difference in the manifested life, is to be sought for in the different forms which have been created for its reception. Inferior forms can only receive life in an inferior degree; superior forms receive it in a superior degree; and as man is the most perfect of all created forms, he must have been designed to receive it in its most perfect degree.

It is thus evident, that degrees of life exist; but it is here important to observe, that degrees are of two sorts, namely, those which are *discrete* and those which are *continuous*. (See *Divine Love*, part iii. By Swedenborg.) By continuous degrees are meant those progressions of them, which slide as it were, gradually, from the pure to the crass, from light to shade, or from heat to cold, or from the higher to the lower condition of natural enjoyments. But it is not so with what are called discrete degrees; by these are meant, as the name implies, that which exists distinctly, such as the end, the cause, and the effect. It is known that these follow in order, but it is supposed to be a continuous order, whereas it is not so, for the cause is one thing prior, the effect is another thing posterior, and each is distinct in itself, though, when considered together, they make one. Many illustrations of this may be collected; a few instances will suffice. Every muscle consists of distinct fibres; these are disposed into distinct fasciculæ, and from a collection of these, results that compound which is called a muscle. It is the same with the nerves, and all other organs of the animal body. A similar fact is observable in the vegetable kingdom; the different kinds of woods being a compagination of distinct fibres. Metals and stones are also known to be a conglobation of distinct parts.* The same things appear when we ascend out of merely material nature. Thus degrees of life in man are evident from what is called his voluntary and involuntary life; also from the life by which he is enabled to carry on abstract and spiritual studies, and that by which he is prompted to seek for sustenance in food. Now we have adverted to these facts and phenomena, to intimate that the

* "We never doubt, on the testimony of our senses, that the parts of matter touch—that different bodies come in contact with one another, and with our organs of sense; and yet there is nothing more certain, than that there is still some distance between the bodies which we think we perceive to touch.—Lord Brougham's *Discourse of Natural Theology*, p. 57.

life of man, and the life of beasts, is each a life distinct in its character, and consequently, that the instinctive knowledge of the animal does not belong to the same degree of life as the educated intelligence of man. The lower degree of man's life has in it something in common with that of the animal, but the highest condition of brutal life has nothing in common with the higher degrees of human life. Thus instinct pertains to the lowest degree of life, which is natural and peculiar to the brute, but intelligence belongs to a higher degree of life which is spiritual, and this is peculiar to man; consequently, the former cannot have intelligence, because they have not that discrete degree of life to which it is related. But each of these distinct degrees is *continuous*, hence the difference between the trained and untrained animal; and the educated and uneducated man.

But while the manifestations of human life are superior to all others, as to quality, expansiveness, and ulterior purposes, it is remarkable that its first manifestations are the most weak of all animated beings. Man is born into the world more helpless and destitute than any other creature. He is then but a feeble organization, with only a faint indication of life; still possessing a substratum of interior forms for its highest developments.

The case, however, is very different with the beasts; they are born into every thing proper to their peculiar condition, and in a very short time, their faculties are put forth with all the excellence belonging to their nature. They know, without instruction, what is nutritious and proper for their food; and avoid, with remarkable sagacity, what is unwholesome and injurious. With equal acuteness they distinguish their friends from their foes, and some of them possess certain delicacies of sensation not common to our race.

Thus, it is evident, that beasts are born into those instincts which are peculiar to their nature, and that they attain the summit of their capabilities in a very short time after they have commenced existence. Whereas, man, though born with the germs of superior life, as is evident by its after developments, is not born into all that of which he is capable. He is, at first, utterly ignorant and helpless, and he acquires the excellences intended for his condition only by means of instruction.* We cannot say of the capabilities of human life, thus far shalt thou go and no farther. This can be asserted only of the instincts of brutes. We know the extent of their knowledge.

Thus it seems evident, that the perfection of life which is

* "By instruction the interiors are formed, and thereby the internals, and are adapted to the reception of the good things of love, and the truths of faith, and thus to the perception of goodness and truth."—*Arcana Coelestia*, n. 1802.

observable in beasts, at their birth, is a sign of their imperfection, while the imperfection of man, at his birth, is an indication of his perfection. He is born without the knowledge of any thing, to the end that he may acquire a knowledge of every thing ; but beasts are born into all the instincts which are proper to their nature, to the end that they may attain no more. These facts show, in the most decided manner, that there is some *essential* distinction between the forms receptive of human and animal life : and in showing man to possess the superior forms, they also indicate that he has been intended for superior ends.

By means of education, man's mental powers emerged out of their obscurity : his thoughts grow, and increase from the merest increments of knowledge to a condition of the most extensive information. This is not the case with the minds of animals. What they have is an endowment of their nature, and not the result of instruction. Those things which some of them have occasionally been taught to do, by the industry of man, are mere peculiarities superinduced upon their instinctive life, and forced upon them by habits contrary to their nature. They do not communicate to others of their species that which they have been taught ; it always dies with the individual. Man is the only teaching being. (See an essay by the Author, on *The Nature of Instinct and the Philosophy of Reason, in the Intellectual Repository* for 1849.)

Beasts may be compared to a piece of ground, which will bear nothing but its own indigenous fruit, and which no labor or cultivation will fit for the propagation of an exotic. But man may be likened to another plot of land, untilled, but rich ; and possessing all the materials, with the necessary climate, for bringing forth every seed that may be sown therein, to its perfection. Or another illustration may be taken from a father, who divided his sons into two classes ; to one of which he gave a certain patrimony, all at once, and so arranged it that they could neither increase nor diminish its value ; while to the other, he gave nothing but capabilities, by which to acquire a variety of possessions for any purpose they might wish. In the former case they are held in bonds, in the latter, they exist in freedom, and every one sees this to be an essentially superior state. The animal is as a trader who can only deal in a given commodity, and in a limited district ; but man is as a merchant who may trade in all things, and who has no other boundaries to his commerce than the world.

These comparisons may assist some in seeing, that the distinction between the mental nature of man and that of animals, is of a vital kind, and that it must originate in some essential difference in the quality of the forms through which the life is displayed.

But a consideration of the rational powers of thought, and the capabilities of enlightened affection will bring out this conclusion with greater certainty. Man is peculiarly a thinking and a reasoning being. Thought and reason, as positive existences, indicate that they have specific forms in which to inhere, — forms of which there are no similarities in any other being, — and that it is from these, man's superiority and power result. Thought and reason, as principles of human life, cannot exist without their appropriate forms, and as the beasts do not indicate the possession of any such principles of life, it is evident that they do not possess any of the forms requisite for their development.

Man, then, has an organism proper to his nature, which the beasts have not — an organism different in kind. His thinking and intellectual powers being a degree, in the perfection of life, above the endowment of the brute; the forms through which this prerogative of humanity are developed, belong to a degree of forms withheld from them. As they have not the interior principles, they have not the interior forms.

Intellect and reason demonstrate the existence of an interior degree of life; and therefore, there must be an interior degree of organic structures requisite for its inherence and development. What, then, is the nature of this structure? We say it must be spiritual. If reason and intellect are spiritual things, then there must be a spiritual organism by which they begin and continue their activities. Although this is an apparent conclusion of philosophy, we have been conducted to it by Revelation. The apostle has distinctly told us, that "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." (1 Cor. xv. 44.) It is to be observed, that he does not say there is a natural body and there *will be* a spiritual body, but he declares they are coeval existences. Now this spiritual body is that organic structure through which intellect and reason display themselves, and this it is which constitutes the human soul. It is, however, to be observed, that it does not live of itself, and that it is only a spiritual organism, created for the reception and retention of life, communicated to it from the Lord. This distinction between the *soul* and the *life*, is also pointed out by the Scriptures. It is, however, more clear in the original of the New Testament than in our version of it, because the translators have not been uniform in rendering the term $\psi\chi\eta$ (*psyche*), the original word for soul. They have sometimes rendered it *life*, as in the passage "I lay down my life for the sheep," (John x. 15,) and in other cases, they have rendered it *soul*, as when Mary said "my *soul* doth magnify the Lord." (Luke i. 46.) Several instances of this sort could be easily selected. But *life*, properly speaking, — *life*

considered as the primary and self-existent Being, from whom men derive what they possess of it, — is expressed by the term ζωη (*zoe*). Hence it is written “in him was *life* ;” (John i. 4;) “I am the *life* ;” (John xi. 25;) “as the Father hath *life* in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have *life* in himself.” (John v. 26.) Thus *psyche* is the term for indicating man’s soul, as a subject for the reception of life, while *zoe* is the expression to indicate the source of it. Hence, we learn from the Scriptures, assisted by the teachings of philosophy, that the human soul is a spiritual body receptive of life from Him who has it in himself.

It is the soul of man which thinks, and feels, and cares, and reasons; these are not the activities of matter, but the sensations of spirit. That care and reason are things of the spirit will be readily conceded; but some hesitation may be experienced in admitting that feeling, — of pain, for instance, — should be attributed to the soul. Nevertheless it must be so, because on the departure of the soul, the material body becomes insensible. If the material body is injured, pain is the consequence; how is this to be accounted for? Because there is a spiritual part in man. But if a beast is injured, he also suffers; must he then also have a soul? Certainly; it is not intended to deny that beasts have souls, only that their souls are not immortal, for reasons which will subsequently appear. But how is it that the soul, as a spiritual thing, is brought into suffering by the disease or injury of the material body? Simply because, under such circumstances, the freedom and impulses of the spiritual body are impeded. So long as it is manifest in the natural world by means of a material organism, the disarrangement of any of the parts of that organism is necessarily felt by the soul as an interruption to its activity, and hence arises the suffering with which disease and injury are accompanied. The soul, then, is a *spiritual* and not a *material* thing. It is, in fact, the human essence, and, therefore, it must possess the human form, because an essence without a form is nothing but an imaginary entity. Spirit and matter are two distinct things; they exist distinctly, nor will they admit of being commixed together. The human soul is present in the natural world with appropriately organized matter, without being itself a part of it, and hence the death of the body by no means impairs the functions, or mutilates the form of the soul. The reason is, because its nature is completely distinct from matter, and perfectly independent of it.

There is an influx into the human mind, inclining it to the favorable reception of this idea, and hence it is that persons, speaking of their deceased friends, usually regard them as still living, and enduring human forms. The Lord said “whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” (John xi. 26.) This,

of course, was spoken of the soul, because the bodies of believers, as well as those of the faithless, are known to die. It is the soul alone that lives; this is the man himself; it is the inmost man, and surely the soul, which lives after the death of the mortal body, must have dwelt within it up to the period of its dissolution; and consequently, its form must be fully and perfectly human — a spiritual body receptive of spiritual, and therefore, of imperishable life from God. This fact is taught by all those portions of the Scriptures, in which the subject is adverted to. It is a subject which Revelation alone can disclose: no one, from his own rational light, could have formed an adequate conception respecting it. Philosophy may illustrate, but it cannot originate, spiritual knowledge. It was among the earliest announcements that was made to man. We are told, by the Scriptures, that "God breathed into man the breath of lives, and man became a living soul." But this fact was equally known to the most ancient inhabitants of the earth; also to Noah and his posterity, and it was from tradition, derived from some of these, that the notion of a soul, like the idea of a God, was incorporated into the ancient philosophies of the world.

The ancient Egyptians, whose history and remains, so far as they have been investigated, show that they possessed a deep insight into mental things, are represented to have been the first asserters of the soul's immortality: * by the first, is here to be understood, the earliest with which the historian was acquainted. From them, the Greeks derived many of their theological speculations, and much of their mythology may be traced to an Egyptian origin. But the Greek literature has been the best preserved, and therein we may trace ideas, on the soul's existence and immortality, bearing some resemblance to those which we have mentioned, notwithstanding the obscurities of expression by which they are, as a whole, beclouded. The reason of such similarities is, because they both come from Revelation as a common origin. Tradition, derived from a primitive Revelation, which had ceased to be remembered, has preserved among the Greeks some intimations of truth upon the subject; while we derive our knowledge respecting it, more direct from the Scriptures.

* Herodotus. Euterpe, cxxiii. It has been observed by historians, that there are many marks of resemblance between the Egyptian and Indian theology; and some have been inclined to believe, that the Hindoos were acquainted with some information respecting the soul, before the Egyptians. Pausanias distinctly says "I know that the Chaldeans and Indian Magi have been the first who asserted the immortality of the soul;" but as the knowledge of it could not have come into the world from any other source than a Revelation from God, it must have been known to the first men to whom that revelation was made, and these, it is evident, were coeval with the Adamic times.

The forms of Revelation will admit of changes adapted to the nature and moral conditions of the people to whom it is vouchsafed, though the essential truths of it will be the same in every form. That the people may retain among them some of the leading ideas of it, long after the forms have been neglected or forgotten, is highly probable. This we hold to have been the source of many of the enlightened sentiments to be found in some of the Greek philosophies. On the subject before us, Plato is famous for maintaining, "that there is an incorporeal substance, and that the souls of men are such."* Aristotle, also, frequently asserts "that there is another substance besides sensibles — a substance separable, and also actually separated from sensibles." (*Metaphysics*, lib. xiv.) Pherecydes Syrus, the preceptor of Pythagoras, Pythagoras himself, and Thales, the most ancient of the Greek philosophers, are said to have held the same opinion. "All these," says the writer *De Placitis philosophorum*, "determined the soul to be an incorporeal and intelligible substance."† Hierocles likewise remarks, "that to our lucid, or splendid body, the gross mortal body is come by way of accession." (*Cudworth's Intellectual System*, vol. iii. 272.) And Socrates so firmly considered the soul to be an interior man, that when questioned by one, as to how he was to be disposed of after death, replied, "any where, provided I do not slip out of your hands," and then turning to another said, "he could never persuade the inquirer that the body was not Socrates."

With these opinions, many of the early Christian fathers agreed. Irenæus distinctly says, "souls are incorporeal in comparison with their bodies," and that "after death, they keep the figure of the body which they had before in this life." *Irenæus Adversus Hæreses*. Book ii. cap. 62. [cap. 34, p. 168. edit, Massueti.] Origen likewise maintained that the soul, after death, had a certain subtle body, with the same characterizing forms that had distinguished it in the world. (*Origen, Adversus Celsus*, book ii. p. 97.) And Methodius, speaking of Origen's commentary on Paul's declaration, "we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of

* *Cudworth's Intellectual System*. Vol. i. 38. Some of the early Christians were accused of Platonizing upon several spiritual subjects. The above suggestion, if duly considered, is adapted to take away much of the reproach which the accusation was intended to convey.

† *Cudworth's Intellectual System*, vol. i. 39. Swedenborg treating of "the human soul," cites the following passages, bearing upon the subject, from Aristotle. "The soul" says he "is that by which we first live, feel, and understand" — (*De Anima*, lib. i. cap. ii.) "The soul exists in our inner part." — (*De Sensu*, cap. ii.) "The soul is that part of man in which life is first contained." — (*Metaphysics*, lib. v., cap. xviii.) — *Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, part ii. chap. iii. n. 248.

God," (2 Cor. v. 1,) considers the "earthly house" to mean the mortal body, and that the "tabernacle" and the "building of God" referred to the subtle body of the soul. (*Photius Biblioth.* p. 919.)

It is true that much is said by the above authors in connection with the citations that are made, which is either cloudy, or inconsistent with the general fact we are attempting to unfold; yet, from the statements selected, it seems plain, that the truth of it has not always been without some kind of witness in the world. But men, in these our days, have been so long accustomed to speak indefinitely about the soul, that when, in the language of the apostle, they are told that it is a "*spiritual body*," they feel, as it were, a shock: the truth comes upon them as a new idea, though it is as old as Revelation.

There is one phenomenon which it is not common to advert to in this inquiry, but which, nevertheless, we think may be fairly pressed into its service. We refer to the circumstance of persons who have lost a limb by amputation or otherwise, frequently experiencing the sensation of its existence.* The fact itself is well attested and commonly acknowledged; if, then, a sensation which is proper to a leg, or an arm, can be experienced when those members are no longer attached to the body, may not the fact be urged as some degree of experimental evidence, indicating the form and independent existence of the soul? If men can feel themselves to possess an arm after the physical structure has been amputated, why may they not experience complete existence after the entire body shall have been removed by death? An affirmative conclusion may be objected to, by those who attribute the phenomenon to memory and nervous sensation. We admit that it is possible for a person to remember a former sensation, but the recollection of it is a very different thing from the sensation itself; and the fact before us is, that it is the sensation itself which is felt, and not the mere recollection of it. It is also true that certain nerves are organs of sensation, that they spring out of the brain, and are distributed with wonderful economy throughout the whole body; still we should not forget that they are but organs of sensation; and then there will be some difficulty in seeing how organs can produce in man a sensation of their complete existence, when they have been partly cut away.†

* "In the case of compound nerves, if the divided surface connected with the brain is irritated, acute pain is felt, as if in the part on which the nerves originally terminated; and after the removal of a limb, it is common for uneasy sensations to be experienced by the patient, as if he still possessed his hand or his foot." — *Human Physiology*, by J. Elliotson, M. D., Cantab. F. R. S., p. 416.

† It is said that "no part of the body, but the encephalon, can have sen-

But we need not press this argument, there are other considerations of a more conclusive character to be adduced.

Every one has the consciousness of possessing something within him which is above matter, and beyond the reach of physical cognizance. This something, we say, is man's soul. It is from this that he thinks and reasons, loves, and resolves to act. It is that immaterial part of him, by which he exercises control over his material structure. That it is a distinct thing from his physical body, is evident, from this circumstance, that it can think and will, and yet at the same time restrain the body from acting; and as such we pronounce it to be a spiritual existence.

It will be asked, what is spirit? We say, in reference to its original essence, that it is God himself; "God is a spirit." But as it is in him we live, move, and have our being, it is plain, that our spirituality is a derivation, and that it consists of those living principles which make a man a *man*, and the existence of which belongs to no other being in created nature;—those principles by which he can reflect upon the past and contemplate the future;—those principles which will not permit him to remain a stationary being, but which urge him onwards, and upwards, to make new discoveries of truth, and beauty, and use. The spirit of man is that principle which the rule cannot measure, nor the line fathom, which space does not obstruct, nor time extinguish; to which the darkness of this world is no night, and its winter no cold, because the spirit can see the light of truth at midnight, and feel the warmth of love amidst the ices of the poles. The human spirit is that which is pained by the expression of insult, and gladdened with the sentiments of approbation. It is that which perceives the warmth of affectionate reception,

sation," and that "sensation is in the encephalon, although instinctively referred to the spot which is its source."—*Human Physiology*, by J. Elliotson, M. D., Cantab. F. R. S., p. 415 note. This simply means, that if you feel a pain in your finger, the sensation is really not there, but in the brain! More than twenty years ago I publicly employed the above argument; and since then have brought it under the attention of several surgeons and physicians with whom I have been personally acquainted, with the view of ascertaining their opinions respecting its nature. They, as physiologists, attempted to explain the phenomenon on some of the grounds above alluded to, but still confessed that they were mere theories, that the circumstance required a more satisfactory explanation, and that, upon Christian principles, they could urge no reasons against the argument. I am gratified to find the same facts adverted to by J. E. Le Boys Des Guays, in his able "*Letters to a Man of the World disposed to believe, (or True System of Religious Philosophy,*) with a view to sustain a similar argument, in which he says, "the amputation of a leg or any other member of the material body, cannot deprive the spiritual body of this member. The person who has lost a limb, preserves then his spiritual body in its integrity; if the spiritual limb is not visible to the eyes of our material body, it is because the material is not capable of seeing any thing but what is material," p. 42.

and feels the coolness of abated love. These facts are known to all men; they are peculiar to the human spirit, and so furnish the reflecting mind with some idea of its nature. The Scriptures speak of it as the living and imperishable principle of man; (Acts vii. 59. "Lord Jesus receive my spirit;") and philosophy defines it to be the human affection and thought. Can you see an affection? Can you handle a thought? You cannot; but why? simply because they are spiritual things, and intangible to the physical senses. Here, then, we have, in a small compass, both the evidence and the definition of a spiritual existence; and if we are asked how spirit differs from what is natural, we reply, that it differs as thought differs from speech, or as love differs from action. Now those affections and thoughts, which constitute spirituality in man, are not abstractions, but real existences, with an appropriate embodiment.

The circumstance of the man who has lost a limb, sometimes feeling as though it still physically existed, may, we think, be adduced as one kind of evidence respecting this class of facts. But every one is aware that purely spiritual affections influence the condition of the body. Remorse of conscience, anger, and disappointment, are attended with acute pains in the head and chest, which extend themselves to several portions of the extremities. Joy and gladness are known to play an important part in the removal of certain morbid states of the body. These facts are well ascertained and commonly acknowledged. But how are they produced? By what is the intercourse between the purely spiritual and the distinctly natural, effected? There must be an instrumental cause by which the mind carries its sensation into the physical structure; and this cause we hold to be the most external forms of the internal man acting upon the purest substances of the natural body. It is only owing to the close connection between the spiritual and natural body during our existence in this world, that the latter appears to speak rationally, and act morally. It seems, indeed, as if the tongue and lips spoke from a certain life in themselves; but it is the thought which speaks, and the will which acts; each by its own organs, which in their internal structure are spiritual, but as to their external are natural. These things are evident, for if we remove thought from speech, the tongue is silent, and if we remove will from action the hands are still. Here, then, we think we have some amount of experimental proof, that "*there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body,*" that the latter acts upon the former as its living cause; and consequently that the SPIRITUAL BODY is the HUMAN SOUL.

But those spiritual forms are strengthened and developed into

activity by the affections and thoughts, which together constitute the mind. This in some measure may appear from the circumstance, that while all things of man's will and understanding exist in the head, as to their first principles, they also, from thence extend themselves into the other parts of the body, even to its extremities. Thus, he who loves and thinks about an object, will, if he observes, find those emotions active throughout his whole frame: so that, as man is always under the influence of affection and thought, and as they are continually putting themselves forth, and finding an existence in every part, it seems plain that they are, by such efforts, strengthening and developing his spiritual body. Hence the spiritual body of man is precisely such as his affections and thoughts have been. The bad man will be a spiritual form of his own evil; while the good man will be the spiritual form of those virtues which he has been enabled to cultivate, as of himself, from the Lord. (*Heaven and Hell*, n. 463, 475.) The natural body, while in a state of union with the spiritual body, may be compared to a sponge filled with generous wine. The fibres of the sponge, which contain and are distended by the wine, have, of themselves, no taste or smell; these are derived from the fluid which is between them, and these, when the wine is squeezed out of them, become mere dead filaments. Such is the natural body when the spiritual body is taken away. (*Intercourse between the Soul and Body*, n. 12.)

That the soul is distinguished by the human form, follows as a rational consequence of its human existence. But here again revelation comes to our aid. The angels are invariably represented to us as lovely human forms, and sometimes they are distinctly spoken of as men. This was the case with those who appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre; (Genesis xviii. 2;) and, also, of the angel whom John was about to worship. (Revelations xix. 10.) But we need not stop to show, that

"Angels are men, in lighter habit clad."

The Scriptures assure us that man continues to live as man, though his natural body dies. This is implied in the Lord's statement, that "many shall come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven," (Matt. viii. 11,) all of whom were dead as to their natural bodies, and yet it is plain, that they were then contemplated as living persons, for the Lord, speaking to the Sadducees of the *ἀνάστασις*, *anastasis*, or man's separate existence from the body, cited the circumstance of God saying to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," and therefore declaring that "He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living," (Mark xii. 26, 27; Exodus

iii. 6.) There would have been no force in the argument, if the patriarchs had not been living, and of course, living with a personal identity. Again, John says, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and the testimony which they held;" (Revelations vi. 9. See also Rev. xx. 4.) Doubtless, these souls were spiritual bodies. The rich man and Lazarus are stated to have died, and yet to have their existence continued in the other life. (Luke xvi. 19-31.) Those existences must have been in spiritual bodies, for their natural bodies were buried in the world; where, also, "five brethren" of Dives yet remained. The parabolical character of this narrative does not at all interfere with the truth of this doctrine, which it was intended to inculcate. Another circumstance, of great force in this argument, is, the appearance of Moses and Elias, talking with the Lord on the occasion of his transfiguration. (Matt. xvii. 3.) Both of those persons had departed from this world some centuries before; yet they were then shown to have been alive, and in the possession of all that was requisite to their identification as human beings. Doubtless, they were among "the spirits of just men made perfect," performing the uses, and enjoying the beatitudes proper to their condition.

But the soul of every one has its own particular identity. Every one has a state of thinking, a condition of affection, and senses of delight, peculiar to himself. No two minds are precisely of the same character. Shades of distinction, in their mental and moral aspect, mark every individual, and therefore, it will follow, that the broad distinction of the sexes is most carefully maintained. Surely, the soul of man is man, and the soul of woman, woman; for "he who made them at the beginning, made them male and female." (Matt. xix. 4.) This statement is as true of the soul as of the body. God has implanted mental and moral distinctions in our respective natures, which no circumstances can obliterate. He has created them; it is not in our power to alter or destroy them.

Thus far, then, we learn from reason, experience, and Revelation, that the human soul is a spiritual body in the human form, and that every one possesses his own particular identity. Also that the soul is not the life of man, but the spiritual organism, created for the reception and retention of life, communicated to it from the Lord, who is its only source: from which facts we conclude that the soul is immortal, and consequently, that there is a spiritual world, in which it continues to live forever. Of the existence of that world, the existence of the soul and its immortality is the plainest proof. But of this immortality we have now to speak.

Now we say, that the spiritual existence of man cannot die,

because it is spiritually connected with Him who has said, "I lift up my hand to heaven and say, I live forever." (Deut. xxxii. 40.) We should be content to rest the entire fact of man's immortality upon that grace of God, which has implanted in universal man, the inward dread of annihilation, and the hope of perpetuity; but other arguments may be useful. The instinctive love of life cannot have been given by genuine benevolence, if it were intended that at some time it should be extinguished. Moreover it seems naturally impossible that the soul can die, when we remember that there are no elements in nature by which it can be injured. Good men feel internal satisfaction and enjoyment, resignation and faith, even when they have the most certain evidence that their bodies are in the process of decay and dissolution. They being in a bond with the supreme goodness, are enabled to perceive the priceless character of the soul, and hence they have no dread of death; they are gifted in their interior life with an extraordinary certainty of immortality — a certainty of inward conviction, which no reasonings can ever impart.

But persons who have not acquired such intimacy with the supreme good, are, in all shades of their recession from it, endeavoring to promote the continuation of their bodily life. In this we find the soul, as it were, attempting to give immortality to the body; and it would do so if it had the power. Now it is the soul which imparts life to the body, and it is the Lord, who is the giver of life to the soul, so that the body, in this respect, bears a similar relation to the soul, that the soul does to the Lord. Therefore, as the soul would give immortality to the body, if it could, we think it reasonable to conclude that the Lord does give immortality to the soul, because he can.

Moreover it cannot be denied that love is one of the most essential attributes of God, nor that he has made man an especial object of his regard; indeed, it is distinctly written that he said "I have created man for my glory." (Isaiah xliii. 7.) The Divine Being then, having created man as an object on whom to confer the benediction of his love, cannot be supposed to withdraw it, without considering him to be inconstant. But this cannot be pretended. Having created man that he might love him, he must perpetuate man, or that love cannot be perpetuated; and who can suppose that any thing in the love of God is not everlasting? He changes not: (Malachi iii. 6.) "He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," (Hebrews xiii. 8,) and he has said "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. xxxi. 3.)

Man's soul is a subject of God's special creation, intended for the special reception of himself. It is indestructible, because it

is an image of God designed for his own residence in the human race. It is "because He lives that we live also." (John xiv. 19.) This divine reason, which the Lord has given for our existence, likewise applies to our perpetuation. As we live because He lives, so we, *i. e.*, our souls, cannot die, because He cannot die. This is the source whence the desire of immortality and the dread of annihilation arises in the human mind. Man having begun to live, must continue to live whether he would or no. In the mere article of life, man has no choice; he cannot avoid the perpetuation of his life by plunging into natural death.

It is true, that man has no sensible consciousness of life being communicated to him, and yet it is evident that it is a communicated thing, because he cannot command its continuance, in the natural body, for a moment. This life, descending into interior appropriate forms, called the image of God, originates, in the spiritual body, the two faculties called will and understanding, which constitute the mind. The mind, however, is not to be confounded with the soul. Both life and mind are included in the idea of the soul's existence; still the soul, properly considered, consists in that spiritual human form, which has been created for the reception of life, and in which the faculties of mind inhere.

Now the immortality of the soul is also evident, from those two faculties with which it is endowed. The understanding is the receptacle of wisdom, and the will is the receptacle of love. By virtue of the understanding, man can think of God, and learn his laws; and by means of the will, he can love God, and obey his laws. The faculties capable of these elevated acts, are the peculiar gifts of God; so also are the knowledge and love of him, and therefore, it is plain, that the faculties, created for the special reception and recognition of these excellences, cannot perish.

Let us view this argument through another aspect. The soul, which has been given to man, is finite, yet, with the aid of Revelation, it is capable of concluding that an infinite God exists. Hence it is evident, that a bond of communication has been established between God and man. Surely then, they who can acknowledge God, and who, by love, are capable of being conjoined with him, must be permanent existences. God does not turn away from that which can recognize and love him; to suppose so is to attribute to him something that is finite and imperfect. If, then, He does not desert man, man cannot die: his immortality, therefore, seems equally certain with the existence of God.

It is to be observed, that although God has created man with capacities to know and love him, that he leaves man free to use them to this end; and therefore, his immortality is not made to

rest upon the right employment of those capacities, but upon the fact of their existence, and hence the immortality of the wicked as well as the good.

The faculties for knowing and loving God, and the consequent organization through which they act, are the peculiar inheritance of man. They belong to a discrete degree of life, with its interior forms, which is above the endowment of the beast. Hence beasts perish while man lives. Beasts, indeed, have souls, because they have life, but they are not immortal, because they have not that spiritual organism by which to know God, or to love any thing respecting him. They have no interior link, by which to connect, in spiritual union, the finite with the infinite. They therefore cease to live, when their bodies die. Thus the great — the fundamental argument for man's immortality, rests upon the fact of his being gifted by creation, with faculties for knowing that there is a God, and for loving his goodness. These demonstrate the existence of an interior spiritual bond between man and God, — that he possesses a condition of life withheld from every other creature, — and also that he is immortal.

CHAPTER IV.

REVELATION IN ALL AGES: ITS CHARACTERISTICS BEFORE THE MOSAIC PERIOD, AND THE LETTER OF THE SCRIPTURES ITS FINAL BASIS.

ARGUMENT. — What is understood by Revelation: Religion created by it: coeval with the first man. Revelation the insemination of Divine sentiments into the minds of all who were in celestial love. A general summary of those sentiments. Perception and its uses. How the Divine speech was perceived, and Divine knowledges preserved with the most ancient people. The state of Divine knowledge in the time of Enoch; an explanation of what is said respecting him. The most ancient Revelation no longer recognized at the time of the flood. Revelation, after that event, to Noah. Its character, and probable duration. Dissensions in the time of Peleg, and the confusion at Babel. The dispersion accounts for two remarkable facts which have distinguished all nations. A written Word at this time, different from that which was given to the Israelites. Among whom it was extant. Proofs from the Scriptures respecting its existence. The Priesthood of Melchisedec, and sacrificial worship before the priesthood of Levi and the Jewish sacrifices. Origin of sacrificial worship. Why the corrupt practices of the ancients respecting it were adopted into the Mosaic Scriptures and the ancient written Word was lost. The commencement of the present Revelation, with the Israelitish history for its basis. The low moral and intellectual character of that people: why that history was chosen for this purpose. The letter inelegant and rude. An inquiry answered respecting the selection of the Israelitish history as the final basis of Revelation. The tables which were the work of God, and broken, represented the letter

of the ancient Word which is lost: the tables which were the work of Moses, and preserved, represented the letter of the Scriptures now extant. Distinction between the tables and the writing. No Revelation withdrawn by man's transgression, but new bases successively provided for it. Regeneration a redevelopment of the states of spiritual life which have been lost; this will capacitate for seeing the spiritual truths within the natural envelope of the letter. The letter of the Scriptures the ultimate of all Revelation, in which the celestial and spiritual things of all the Divine communications are in their fulness. The outermost things of the Word connected with the innermost of it, by successive and simultaneous order. The letter of the Scriptures contains a celestial and spiritual sense: consequent on the argument pursued. Other arguments leading to the same conclusion. Why such senses have been doubted. How man may be reassured respecting their existence. Analogies between the Word in the letter and the Lord in the flesh; also between the Word in its spirituality, and the Lord in His Divinity. The inner sense the ground of its holiness, the means of angelic communication with man, and the distinguishing peculiarity of the Bible.

As the idea of God's existence must have sprung out of his Revelation of that fact to man; and as that Revelation implies the existence of the human spirit to which it was made, and for whose edification it was intended; the next step in the progress of our argument is, to inquire into the characteristics of those Revelations which existed before the Mosaic period, and the nature of the letter of the Scriptures, in which they are all contained as in a final basis.

By Revelation, we understand the supernatural communication, by God to men, of certain spiritual information which they could not obtain by any of the ordinary processes of the human intellect; and with which it is important that they should be acquainted. Still, when communicated, it is of such a nature that minds disposed to believe, may see and comprehend it. Religion was created by Revelation; and man, as a religious being, depends upon it for his existence. "Where there is no vision the people perish." (Proverbs xxix. 18.)

It has been intimated, in preceding chapters, that Revelation existed among mankind, before the Scriptures which are now extant. Of this fact the Scriptures themselves furnish the evidence. They plainly state that it was coeval with the first men: "God called their name Adam," and many instances are recorded in which he spoke to them; among these are the commandments which he gave them. (Consult the early portions of Genesis.) These Revelations were to them "the Word:" hence it is written "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Here the Supreme Being is called "the Word," because he manifests himself through the communication of truth; hence he is said to be "the light of men," and "the true light which enlightens every man that

cometh into the world." (John i. 1, 4, 9.) Even when he "was made flesh and dwelt among us," he said "I am the truth," that is, the visible personation by whom it has always been declared. So that "the Word which was in the beginning" was the Revelation of Divine truth, made known to primeval men.

It is not, however, to be understood that this Revelation was a written Word. The state of man "in the beginning," was not such as to require it in documentary form. The primitive mind and heart were clear and pure. So long as men continued in this condition, they were a celestial people; that is, they loved goodness with a supreme delight. But although the celestial character was afterwards forfeited by transgression, the *genius* with which it had been associated was not extinguished until the period of the flood. Now the genius of love is to rule the whole mind, and bring its possessor into a conjunction with the object loved. This is peculiarly evident in the case of conjugal attachments. Love removes the obstacles standing in the way of that which it is pursuing. It procures light by which to surmount the difficulties which obstruct its purposes: and every one knows, that the activity of love promotes the activity of thought, and thus, as it were, opens the mind to innumerable perceptions, which otherwise could not have come into existence. The men, then, to whom the Word was given in the beginning, being principled in celestial love, the ardency of this affection would bring the understanding into an enlightened conformity with itself. Whilst they were in the love of whatsoever was good and excellent, their minds would be prepared for the reception of corresponding light from the Lord; and where there is preparation for the reception of such a gift, the Divine bounty has assuredly bestowed it. He withholds no good thing from those who love Him. This light, to them, was Revelation: it consisted in the knowledge of certain general but supernal truths, such as, that there is a God, who created and rules the universe; also, that there is a human soul, made after his spiritual image, and that all goodness, truth, and life are from Him. That such knowledges were extant, is evident from the early portions of the book of Genesis. They plainly constituted the substrata of those intercourses with God which the people of those times are described to have enjoyed. These general truths were, in the language of the prophet, "put in their inward parts, and written in their hearts." (Jer. xxxi. 33.) After having been gifted with the knowledge of such superior truths, they were capable of confirming them by a great variety of particular ideas, which day by day they were acquiring and enlarging. All that they knew of internal and spiritual things was the result of Revelation:

but the perception,* consequent on the devoted love in which they were principled, enabled them to see innumerable things, in universal nature, tending to confirm them, and to harmonize with them. Revelation was to them, as it always has been, the communication of supernatural knowledge; perception was a part of their common condition. By this, the outer world became to them a sort of book, in which they could read of celestial and spiritual things. They not only saw, as we may do, that every object is impressed with some specific mark and peculiar display of the Divine attributes, but because they were superior to us in purity of intelligence and love, they could perceive some particulars respecting the Divine, in every object; and also respecting themselves, because they were images and likenesses of that Divine. The sun, the moon, and the stars; the mountains, woods, and rivers; the birds, the beasts, and fishes, all told to them a spiritual tale. They *saw* the physical existences, but *perceived* therefrom an inward teaching. They beheld a light and felt a moral in all the outworks of creation, because they stood in a close relationship with the Divine, and had their minds illuminated by Him, from whom those objects spring. Thus they were guided in perceiving, from the visible world, particular sentiments respecting truth and goodness, by the Revelation they received. In short, they were instructed by the Lord. This is plainly implied by the Divine teachings and requirements communicated to Adam during his residence in Eden: and the rivers, trees, and beasts therein, were all suggestive of heavenly things.†

The means through which these Revelations were made, do not appear to have differed essentially, from those by which they were effected in after times. The Lord is represented to have spoken to Moses and the Prophets, and the same fact is stated of Adam and their immediate descendants. This speech, at that time, may be considered as an eternal dictate from the Lord, flowing into their mind through its interior organs, and so impressing the dictated truths upon their hearts and thoughts. From the genius of those people, which enabled them to perceive the relation between heavenly sentiments and their physical resemblances, those interior impressions would find utterance

* By perception, we mean that internal light, which is given by the Lord to those who are influenced by love, and by which primeval men could instantly determine what was right and true, under every circumstance.

† "A study of the most Ancient Revelations to man, would clearly demonstrate that the Almighty, from the beginning, selected a *mystic form* of communication of his will:—doubtless, because he saw it would convey the most spiritual notions of his own essence, and fasten the most powerfully on man's imagination."—*Scriptural Studies*, by the Rev. W. Hill Tucker, M. A., Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, p. 270.

among them, by means of some corresponding thing, as readily as our thoughts now pass into the conventional sounds of our language.

Those Divine knowledges were, for a considerable period, preserved by the love and memory of the people : but the excellency of their character declined, and then the correctness of those knowledges was endangered. When the love of an object fails, the fidelity of the memory respecting it, is impaired. When those ancient people ceased to love interior things with purity, they failed to remember them with accuracy. Under such circumstances they must have passed away, if the Divine Providence had not interposed for their further preservation. This was effected through Enoch, who collected them into a doctrinal form ; and it is referred to in that remarkable passage which says "He walked with God : and was not ; for God took him." * By "his walking with God," is signified, his coöperation with the Divine Providence, in the means by which revealed truth was to be preserved : and by, "he was not," is meant that nothing of his mind or character was in the doctrines so collected, because, "God took him :"—took him under his special guidance, and directed him in the performance of the work.

From this period until the flood, Divine things were learned by means of doctrinal precepts. But in that catastrophe, were

* Gen. v. 24. The name Enoch means to *instruct* or *initiate*; and Dr. A. Clarke observes, that "we may consider him, as receiving a pious education, and the Divine influences through it." — *Commentary*. Ancient tradition represents him as the *first author*. Visions and prophecies are commonly ascribed to him, which he is said to have arranged into a book. The Arabians called him *Edris*, i. e., *the learned*. *Kitto's Bib. Cyc. Art. Enoch*. Jude, also, plainly regarded him as a prophetic teacher. — *General Epistle*, 14. The above passage, in connection with the apostle's statement, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death," (Heb. xi. 5,) is commonly understood to mean, that Enoch passed out of the world into heaven, without the experience of natural death. This, however, appears to us to be a mistaken opinion. It certainly cannot be proved from the text in Genesis, that Enoch did not die like other men, and surely, the apostle's statement is not a clear expression of that idea. If he were so taken to heaven, what is to become of the emphatic declaration, "flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of God"? (1 Cor. xv. 50.) If the common supposition is true, he must have gone to heaven with his flesh and blood ! If he had them not, when admitted into the kingdom of heaven, (it matters not how he was deprived of them,) then, before such admission, he must have experienced natural death. But we are not disposed to push, to any length, the difficulties which the popular notion involves. The above, we hold to be the true view of the case, and the object of the history. Nor is this at all inconsistent with the apostle's statement, since, by being "translated that he should not see death," is simply meant, that his character was so *transformed* by the force of his faith, that he was thereby preserved from that sin, which had then so fatally set in upon the world, and qualified for the duty above adverted to.

swept away all those *interior* perceptions of the Religion and Revelation which had been committed to the first men.

Among the survivors of that event, Revelation was continued, and even extended to their descendants. Hence it is written, that "God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you." (Gen. ix. 8 9.) Doubtless those Revelations were effected by a Divine influence acting upon the interiors of their minds, and dictating the spiritual things to be received therein. Those people also must have known, that natural things were the representatives of spiritual ideas, because they had previously lived with, and were among the better part of those by whose Religion it had been taught.* But with Noah and his immediate posterity, this knowledge appears to have been only of a doctrinal character, whereas, with the primitive people — his antediluvian predecessors, — it was a reality perceived. These knowledges were a plane, into which spiritual instruction concerning heavenly things could be insinuated by the Lord, and this instruction was the Revelation, which, in the Noetic period, underlay them. The Scriptures, which are the only histories we have of those times, do not inform us how long such Revelation was continued, nor of the means through which it was propagated. It is highly probable, that it was preserved for a considerable time by the faith and obedience of the people to whom it was committed, and that by them it was handed to their descendants, with fidelity and care. So long as those men continued in the intelligent simplicity of worship and obedience, faith held the spiritual truths of Revelation in a state of safety; but this simplicity departed, and then the maintenance of truth was endangered. We are informed that dissensions arose, and that a division had taken place in the days of Peleg. (Gen. x. 25.) The confusion, which afterwards occurred at Babel, arose out of the corruptions which had been successively introduced into religious things: indeed, it was the confusion of spiritual knowledge, rather than of natural language, which is signified by that history. It was this which effected the dispersion, and in that event the people carried with them, into various portions of the

* "The most ancient people performed no other worship but what was internal. They were sensible indeed, of the external things relating to the body and the world, but they cared not for them; in every particular object of sense, they perceived somewhat divine and celestial; as for example, when they saw any high mountain, they did not perceive the idea of mountain, but of height, and by virtue of height, they perceived heaven and the Lord; hence, it came to pass that the Lord was said to dwell on high, and Himself was called the Most High: and afterwards the worship of the Lord was solemnized on mountains: the case was similar in other instances." — *Arcana Cœlestia*, n. 920.

earth, certain religious sentiments which they had corrupted from a Divine original. These circumstances enable us to account for the existence of two remarkable facts, which have distinguished the early condition of all nations whose history is known :—namely, that something of God, and religion, has always been acknowledged by them ; and also, that those things were always spoken of, in a style eminently figurative. The acknowledgment of God and religion underlay even the wildest corruptions, while the figurative style of treating it, took its rise from the knowledge of representation, which prevailed up to the period of the dispersion.

Thus, we find that the *love* of the first men before the flood, and the *faith* of the first men after it, gradually fell away from the excellency of those Revelations which had been granted to them ; and that in consequence, the Revelations which had had their bases therein, ceased to be appreciated. Still, Revelation was not to be withdrawn, because a more permanent basis had not yet been provided for it. What, then, was the next course adopted for its security ? We think there are strong reasons for believing that a *written Word* was next commenced ; different, however, from that which was afterwards given through Moses and the Prophets, to the sons of Israel, and that it took its character from those doctrinals which had been previously collected by Enoch. We think it was extant before the dispersion ; and for some time afterwards, known among the early inhabitants of Canaan, Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Chaldea, Assyria, Egypt, Zidon, Tyre and Nineveh : and from those places, some of the spiritual information which it contained, was propagated throughout various portions of India, with its islands ; and from the maritime parts of Asia, into Greece. The remains of the mythological writings of Greece, are proofs, that the people of that country, and their immediate predecessors,* spoke of reli-

* Rollin states, that "the Hebrews, Chaldeans, Arabians, and others, give no other appellation to the whole body of the Grecian nations, than that of Ionians," and that these descended from "Javan or Ion (for in the Hebrew, the same letters differently pointed, form these two different names,) the son of Japheth, the grandson of Noah." *History of Greece*, Art. iii. *The Primitive Origin of the Grecians*. The Vedas of the Hindus, and the sacred books of the Buddhists, by whom the Vedas are rejected, are both written in Sanscrit, and "since the foundation of the Asiatic Society, in Calcutta, by Sir. Wm. Jones, in 1784, the study of Asiatic literature has made great advances. The secret of the Sanscrit literature has been obtained from the Bramins, and its connection with the Greek put beyond doubt."—*Popular Encyclopædia*, Art. *Asiatic Societies*. "The Greek language is a derivation from the Sanscrit ; therefore, Sanscrit-speaking people—i. e., Indians, must have dwelt in Greece, and this dwelling must have preceded the settlement of those tribes, which helped to produce the corruption of the old language ; or, in other words, the people who spoke that language—i. e., the Indians, must have been the primitive settlers ;

gion and history, in terms remarkably symbolic. A similar fact appears from what Asiatic researches have brought to light, concerning the ancient religion and literature of that portion of the world. They still profess to have certain sacred books, and although they may not possess any Divine authority, there can be no well-founded doubt, that the idea among them, of a written Word, arose out of the fact of such books having been possessed by some of their ancient predecessors.

But the existence of such books is not mere conjecture. The Scriptures furnish us with indisputable evidence on the subject. Moses informs us of a work, which he calls "the Book of the Generation of Adam," (Gen. v. 1,) which is commonly allowed to have been a written document. Indeed, it is admitted, that the early portions of Genesis are of a fragmentary character, and much learned criticism has been employed upon the subject of their arrangement. It has been a question whether Moses obtained his information from written documents, or oral tradition, but the chief weight of the argument goes to establish the opinion of its having been procured from written sources. Writers, as early as Vitringa, came to this conclusion. (About 1690. *Obs. Sac.* i. 4.) It is well known that the "Document Hypothesis," was supported by Eichorn and others in Germany; an opinion which has been adopted by English scholars. Dr. Pyc Smith states, without hesitation, that "the earlier part of the book of Genesis consists of several distinct compositions, marked by their differences of style, and by express formularies of comment." (*Scripture and Geology*, p. 207.) This being the case, and those portions being incorporated into the Word which was afterwards provided for the sons of Israel, proves that there was a Divine Word extant, prior to the time of Moses. But there are other evidences. Moses has cited, with express acknowledgment, from an historical document, called "the Book of the Wars of Jehovah," and also from a prophetic source called the "Enunciations."* That these, especially the latter, were Divine compositions, is plain, from the circum-

or, at least, they must have colonized the country so early, and dwelt there so long, as to have effaced all dialectic traces of any other inhabitants: just as the Saxons displaced the feeble remains of the dialect of the ancient Britons, in this island, and imparted a thoroughly Saxon stamp to the genius of the English language." — Pococke's *India in Greece*, pp. 18, 19.

* Num. xxi. 14, 27. "Most interpreters take the Book of the Wars of Jehovah, for some ancient records of those countries to which Moses refers." — *Annotation*, by the Rev. W. Hewlett, B. D. Our version renders what we have called "Enunciators," "they that speak in proverbs," but the original more properly means *Enunciations*, and their compositions *Prophetical Enunciations*. *Hammoshelim*, the Hebrew expression, not only denotes proverbs, but also prophetic announcements, as in Num. xxiii. 7, 18; xxiv. 3, 15, where it is said that Balaam uttered his parable, i. e. *Heb.*

stance of the quotation from it being nearly in the same expressions as those employed on one occasion, by Jeremiah. (Compare Numbers xxi. 28, 29, with Jeremiah xlviii. 45, 46.) "The Book of Jasher" is likewise mentioned by Joshua, and the writers of the Second Book of Samuel, (Joshua x. 13; 2. Sam. i. 18;) and the citations given, plainly show, that it was of a prophetic character.* The conclusion, therefore, that there was a Divine Word extant, before that which we now possess, seems to us to rest upon the most valuable evidence. Still, proofs of another kind may be adduced.

We are told that Melchisedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and, blessing Abraham, received tithes. This Melchisedec is said to have been a priest of the Most High God. (Gen. xiv. 18-20.) Thus, there was a recognized priesthood of the Most High, before the institution of the Levitical priesthood, and the offices and privileges were similar to those of the Levites, that is, they offered bread and wine, blessed the people, and received tithes, as the Levites did. (Consult Leviticus ix. 22, 23; xxi. 6; Num. xv. 10; xviii. 24.) Surely, then, if the Mosaic institutions respecting those things, were of Divine arrangement, those which were so exceedingly similar in preceding times, must have descended, (more or less remotely,) from a similar source.

It is evident, that many of the nations, in the time of Moses, had long been acquainted with sacrificial worship, in some respect similar to that which was afterwards established among the sons of Israel. As practised by the Moabites in Shittim, it appears to have been so exceedingly like that which Moses had directed, that the Israelites were readily seduced to respect and bow themselves to it. (Num. xxv. 1, 2, 3.) Balaam, also, caused altars to be built, and offered oxen and sheep thereon for a burnt offering. (Num. xxiii. 1, 2, 3.) Now Balaam was from Syria, and he, certainly, had not derived his knowledge of this mode of approaching the Deity, from the Mosaic Revelation. Whence, then, did he obtain this information? This question cannot be satisfactorily answered, but by admitting that it was derived from a Word, different from that which was then in the process of being provided through the legation of Moses. If Moses received his instructions concerning sacrificial worship

Moschal, enunciation. Dr. A. Clarke remarks, that "the *moshelim* of the ancient Asiatics were the same, in all probability, as the *Poetæ* among the Greeks and Latins." — *Commentary on Numbers* xxi. 27.

* Some of the difficulties experienced by the mention of this book, together with the conjectures by which it is attempted to remove them, may be seen in Dr. Kitto's *Bib. Cyclo. Art. Book of Jasher*. Nothing, however, is established respecting it, and the above appears to us to offer the only possible satisfactory solution of the subject.

from a Divine source, why may not Balaam, (as he had not yet had any intercourse with the Israelitish people,) have acquired his information of a practice so similar in its nature, from some other Revelation, the letter of which, at that period, was but imperfectly understood?

We do not mean that the ancient Word, of which we are speaking, directed sacrifices to be offered in the sense in which we find those idolatrous nations to have practised them in the time of Moses, but that such sacrificial observance had arisen from sensual interpretations of the purely spiritual instructions of that Word. As it has been intimated, the people, after the flood, *learned from doctrine* what their more ancient predecessors *knew from perception*, namely, that the objects of the visible world were representatives of spiritual sentiments, consequently, that beasts of various sorts were significant of certain affections with men. Of this fact, there are many remains among all people at the present day: children are called lambs; the cunning, foxes; the harmless, doves; the wicked, vipers; and the deceitful, serpents. It is true, that the Scriptures may have furnished us with these modes of expression; this, however, does not alter the argument; it rather stamps it with divine authority. When, then, the ancient Word treated, as it doubtless did, of approaching the Lord with the affections of love and the sentiments of faith; it would, according to the symbolic mode of speaking prevalent in those times, direct it to be done by the dedication of a lamb, or the presentation of a kid. These directions among a spiritually-minded people, would be well understood as referring only to the duty of approaching the Lord under the influence of innocent affections and purity of thought. They would never have conceived the strange idea of slaying an animal, &c., as a means of worshipping God: they would have known that He "desired mercy and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." (Hos. vi. 6; Matt. ix. 13; xii. 7.) But this interior condition subsequently passed away; men became sensual in their conception of religious duties: they lost sight of the spiritual idea, which had been representatively expressed, and thereupon, a carnal practice took its place. Thus, sacrificial worship gradually arose, as men passed away from spiritual things. Losing sight of the real meaning of representative instruction, they substituted the *symbol* for the thing signified. Hence the sacrificial worship, so universally practised in the time of Moses, arose out of certain spiritual teachings being perverted by the descendants of those, among whom a written Revelation had once existed. The offerings of Abel and Noah, are not to be understood in the sense of slaying and burning animals. What is written on those things is according to the repre-

sentative method of describing the spiritual worship of those people. It deserves, also, to be remarked, that there is not the least intimation respecting the death of animals given in either of the narratives; moreover, they are called offerings; nor do we read of sacrifices until the time of Jacob,* when the idea of spiritual offerings had been perverted into the notion of carnal sacrifices.

From this view of the subject, we not only see that sacrificial worship was of human origin, — an opinion held by the “fathers,” and some of the most distinguished biblical scholars,† — held, because they could not reconcile so strange an institution with the moral attributes of God, — but we also learn the precise ground out of which it came. It is admitted on all hands, that neither the light of nature, nor the principles of reason, could have suggested it, and from this it has been argued, that it must have been directed‡ by God, as if the Divine Being could *command* any thing for the observance of man, which is contrary to the reason and nature He has given to him. But the above view shows us plainly, how the irrational practice came into existence; we see that it arose from the perversion of Divine teachings, and was a substitution of the symbol for the thing signified, a circumstance easy to be conceived, when we think of mankind rejecting spirituality and falling into naturalism.

If it is asked why it was, that these very corruptions of men were afterwards introduced into the Mosaic Scriptures under the Divine arrangement, we think the answer may be found in the principle laid down by the Lord on another occasion. In the conversation respecting the repudiation of a wife, the Pharisees said unto Jesus, “Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.” (Matt. xix. 7, 8.) The principle is the same respecting the introduction of the sacrificial rite into the Mosaic Revelation. It was done in accommodation to the weakness of the people who had become familiarized with it during their residence in Egypt, and without the permission of which they could not have been

* Gen. xxxi. 54. This appears to be the first instance in which sacrifice is named in the sense of killing beasts; which is here the marginal reading.

† Justin Martyr, Chrysostom, the author of the work called *Apostolical Constitutions*. See Outram's *De Sacrif.*; Rev. J. Davison's *Inquiry into the origin and intent of Primitive Sacrifice*; and the Rev. G. S. Faber's *Treatise on the Origin of Expiatory Sacrifice*. Grotius was of the same opinion.

‡ See Dr. Magee's *Dissertation on the Natural Unreasonableness of the Sacrificial Rite*. No. IV., *On the Atonement*.

induced to worship the true God. (The great body of the fathers were of this opinion; a number of them are cited by Spencer, in his *De Legib. Heb.*) Thus, sacrificial worship was allowed to them, because of the hardness of their hearts, but from the beginning it was not so. Such institutions were not of the Divine will, but mere permissions, for it is distinctly written, "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices; but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you." (Jeremiah vii. 22, 23.) To us therefore, it seems evident, that all those religious practices, which prevailed just before the establishment of the Israelitish nation, and specifically those, which bore resemblance to the Levitical institution, must have originated from a previously existing Word, the spiritual character of which had been lost sight of for some considerable time.* If it be asked, why this ancient Word was finally deserted, we answer, that it was in consequence of

* The book of Job, we have no doubt, was a production of those early times. It possesses scarcely any of the outward characteristics which belong to the "law and the prophets;" and even the construction of the language is considered, by competent judges, to be exceedingly different from them. Throughout the whole composition, there is no allusion whatever to the Israelitish history, which is strong presumptive evidence that it was written before the nationality of that people. Critics, indeed, have attempted to make out similarities between some of its statements and those which are expressed in other portions of the Scripture, with the view of showing that the Hebrew literature must have been known to the writer of this work; and that, therefore, the absence of all mention of the people of Israel, is not to be received as evidence of their being unknown to him. This however, appears to us to be an argument exceedingly feeble and inconclusive. It is true, that there are statements in this book respecting the creation, the formation of man, the unity of God, and the existence of Satan, which have some general resemblance to the description of those things given in the early portions of Genesis, and it is not improbable, that the writer of Job might have derived such information from those documents; but those documents were extant before the Exodus, and therefore, they might have been known to the writer before the time of Moses. Moses himself, as intimated above, copied those documents into his Genesis. Again: from apparent parallelisms between several other passages in Job, the Pentateuch, Psalms and Proverbs, some have held that the book of Job was written by Moses, some by David, and others by Solomon, thus all agreeing, that it was produced after the deliverance from Egypt. Now while we may admit the fact of parallelisms, we can attach no weight to the conclusion. The notion of the Mosaic being the first written Revelation, has had more to do with this result than the force of argument. By such critics, the question has been prejudged, and they have been forced into the assertion by prejudice rather than by evidence. Surely it no more follows from the existence of such parallel passages, that the writer of Job cited (for this can be the only meaning of the argument) from the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Proverbs, than that

that entire change, which had been gradually effected in the mental character of the people. It was originally prepared for the reception of a spiritually-minded race, and written in a style suited to them. This is evident from the specimens above adverted to. But for some time preceding that of the Mosaic era, mankind had become eminently sensual in all their views and observances of religious things; perversions arose, and these, at length, became so gross and great, that men could no longer appreciate the instruction of documents, constructed during a superior condition of the human intellect, and designed for its specific use. Hence, this ancient Word was gradually unattended to, and finally forgotten. And hereupon it pleased the Lord to make provision for the commencement of another Word, which should have its basis, not like its predecessor, in factitious things, but in the actual history of a peculiar people; so far as it could be made instrumental in representing the Divine will and wisdom. It is thus evident, that the world has never been without a Revelation. God has always provided means for the recognition of Himself by man. Without that recognition, there could be no religious light — no spiritual virtue, and consequently, none of that conjunction between man and God, which man's continuation from age to age proves to have existed. Doubtless, the bases on which those Revelations have rested in the world, have been different, as the states of men, to whom they have been vouchsafed, have differed. The history of the Adamic, Noatic, Babel-building, and Mosaic periods, exhibits very different features of the human character. Although, then, a Revelation has been made to all, the basis of it has been different with each; that which was suited to the first, would have been utterly unintelligible to the last. The interior love which prevailed in the Adamic period, had entirely perished in the Israelitish times; it therefore appears, that the several bases which Revelation has acquired in the world, have successively declined

the writers of those several books should have cited from him. But there is no necessity for pressing this opinion; we adduce it merely to show that one view can be no better supported than the other. The existence of such parallelisms may be satisfactorily accounted for on other grounds. The book of Job is written in a representative style, similar to that which prevailed among the ancients; it consequently contains Divine and spiritual sentiments. The reappearance of these in subsequent Scriptures, proves that they had a common Divine origin, and not that the one quoted from the other, without acknowledgment. That the book was extant before the Exodus, we think rests upon the strongest evidence. Mason Good, and other eminent scholars, have been of this opinion; so also was Swedenborg. It is supported by the character of its language, from which Dr. Hengstenberg, Professor of Theology in the University of Berlin, says, "we may be led to infer that the work was written in the remotest times, when the separation of the dialects had only begun, but was not yet completed."

in dignity, as men in different ages have rejected purity ; so that at length it has, in the sacred Scriptures, obtained the lowest possible basis, that being for the most part, the actual history of a peculiar people.

It is well known that the Israelites were in an exceedingly low condition, both as to intellect and morals, at the time of their liberation from Egypt ; nor is there any striking indication of their having been raised much above this degradation during any periods of their nationality. Moses distinctly represents them as a stiff-necked people, (Deut. ix. 6 ;) and all the prophets repeat this idea respecting them in various ways ; moreover, they were the fewest of all people. (Deut. vii. 7.) It seems therefore, that God, in selecting their history to form a sort of general basis for the Revelations he has been pleased finally to vouchsafe, has chosen the very lowest of which they are admittive. It is also to be observed, that the literal composition of the Scriptures is not, on all occasions, so regular and attractive as criticism might desire, when guided by those rules of art which decide literary excellence. Though it contains some instances of magnificent writing, surpassing in grandeur and force of sentiment, any thing that has ever issued from merely human efforts, yet it must be confessed, that as a whole, and when judged of by the laws of criticism, invented by the schools, it appears inelegant and rude.* Nevertheless this is the very structure which the Divine has chosen to be the final continent of his Revelation.

It may indeed be asked, why the History of the Jewish people should have been selected to form this general basis, in preference to that of any other ? Those who would urge this point as a difficulty, should not forget that if the history of any other nation had been chosen, the same question might be put. We do not say this to evade an answer, but merely to intimate, that in such a case, it must have been because such history would have been better suited to the intentions of the Deity. The Israelitish History then, was selected because it was best adapted for representing the Divine purposes. The genius and character of the people were best suited for the reception of a ceremonious Religion ; they also could be guided by supernatural direction, with less interference with their freedom than others ; these things were such as to afford the most appropriate materials for

* The language of the New Testament is a peculiar and inferior dialect. It is not a pure tongue : it has not the pictorial euphony of Isaiah, nor the lucid diction of Xenophon. It is a broken speech — Hebrew in essence, and Greek in dress ; Hebrew in spirit, and Greek merely in body, drapery, and costume. That Greek has not the grace and elegance of classic times. Plato would have sneered at it for its barbarous structure." — *North British Review*, Feb. 1852.

the final basis of Revelation in the world. There can be no doubt, if their disposition had been different, that the letter of the Scriptures would have been so, if it had then pleased the Divine Providence to have selected their history for the purpose we are contemplating. The letter of the Word by which the Scriptures were preceded, was in accordance with the spiritual genius for which it was provided; but as that genius departed, that letter perished, and another letter was vouchsafed, suited to the rude condition into which mankind had descended, and this was the very lowest to which a Divine Revelation *could* descend. Thus, the outer structure of God's communications has undergone some changes — changes from the highest to the lowest forms of which it is admissible — in order to meet the varied requirements of men in different ages, during which they were descending into the mire of spiritual ignorance and degradation.

A remarkable intimation concerning those changes, and that the final form of the Word with which we are acquainted, was adopted on account of the sensual character of the Jewish people, is represented by the circumstances which attended the delivery of the Ten Commandments. They were twice written. Of the first tables it is said, that they "were the work of God;" (Exodus xxxii. 16 :) but the second were the work of Moses. (Exodus xxxiv. 1-4.) Now those tables represented those external forms, which constituted the literal sense of Revelation; because that sense, whatever it might be, is the plane in which the Divine has chosen to express himself to men. One reason why the law of the Decalogue is thus representative, is because it is the epitome of the whole Word. It inculcates love to God and charity to man, and Jesus said, "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. xxii. 40.)

It is evident, that the character of the first tables was different from the second, because they were the work of God; whereas the latter were the work of Moses. The former represented the letter of Revelation, as it existed before the time of Moses, and with which he was in some measure acquainted, together with its greater adaptability for expressing spiritual things; and the breaking of them, when he beheld the people worshipping the golden calf, denoted that so elevated a form of Revelation was unsuitable to so sensual a nation; and that therefore it became a lost thing to them. But the second tables, which were hewn by the hand of Moses, represented that form of Revelation which he was the chosen instrument to deliver to the sons of Israel. It is however to be observed, that the *tables*, in each case, are carefully distinguished from the *writing*; and that the writing in both is distinctly asserted to be God's. The reason is, because those internal truths which the tables contain and

which could not be known without a Revelation, are entirely of the Divine inscription. *They* have always been the same, notwithstanding the changes in those external forms for their expression, which the Divine mercy has adopted in consideration of the altered circumstances and declension of men. Although the second tables were simply the work of Moses, the *writing* on them was the same as on the first. Thus the new external, which Revelation was about to assume, was to have the same Divine internal as that which distinguished its predecessor. No spiritual truths were withdrawn from men in consequence of their decline ; no heavenly sentiments have been banished from the world through man's transgression, but the Lord has been mercifully pleased to provide a new envelope for them, suited to the descending character and condition of the people to whom they have been vouchsafed. The essential nature of spiritual truth has not undergone any change by this process. It is no more altered by being presented in another clothing, than man is by a change of dress. The interior, living, undying things of Revelation have remained, — God having, from time to time, surrounded them with an accretion which should at once preserve them for man's use, in the world, during the process of his regeneration, and protect them from his profanation so long as he wallowed in his vices. Regeneration will be a redevelopment of all those interior states of love and faith, by which our predecessors, in purer times, have been distinguished : and this process will gradually unfold the envelope of Revelation as we now possess it, and introduce its subject into an acquaintance with those spiritual knowledges within, which constituted the Revelations made in superior times.

But the letter of the Scriptures not only contains within it, all the spiritual truths which had been divulged to men before the period of its commencement ; but it is also the continent of others, of which it is the only exponent. The letter of the Scriptures, is the ultimate form of all Revelation, suited to the wants of the ultimate condition into which the fall has brought our race. In this form, all Divine, celestial, and spiritual truth is in its fulness, sanctity and power ; it is, as it were, the shell, in which are included the albumen, the yolk, and the living germ. The shell being adapted to the appreciation of a natural, the albumen to a spiritual, and the yolk to a celestial condition ; while the living germ may represent its connection with the Supreme. The shell is a distinct substance from the other three, and yet essential to their completeness ; they exist in fulness by it, and without it their proper uses could not be attained. So is it with the Scriptures. The letter contains a spiritual, celestial, and Divine sense, and therefore, they are in their fulness by it,

nor without it could they accomplish the uses for which they are designed. This was equally true of the Revelations which preceded the Scriptures ; they have always had an external, which was as a shell, over which men could, as it were, incubate, and bring out living things for spiritual use. Every one may see, that Divine teachings cannot be introduced to the natural man but by some natural medium ; and also, that that medium, to be effective, must, in some measure, be concordant with the genius of the people to whom it is given. Without this, it would be unintelligible, and consequently, useless. The letter of the Scriptures is such a medium. It is the last thing in the Divine communications, to which are attached a first and intermediate cause : the first, by means of the intermediate, causes itself to be present in the last, so that the outermost things are connected with the innermost, by successive and simultaneous order. *Successive* order is that by which one thing succeeds another, from what is highest to what is lowest : thus from the Divine succeeds that which is celestial, from this, what is spiritual, and from this, what is natural : but *simultaneous* order is that by which one thing is adjoined to another, thus, that by which the Divine is adjoined to the celestial, the celestial to the spiritual, and the spiritual to the natural. In successive order, each of these things is distinct, but by simultaneous order, they are all adjoined. Both of these orders may be contemplated as existing in a tapered column. Every degree of its elevation is a distinct successive measurement : and yet each is so adjoined to the other, that if the apex were to sink down, and carry with it the adjoining degrees, the whole would become a coherent body in a plane, the apex constituting the inmost of simultaneous order, and the base the outermost of successive order. Now the letter of the Word is the basis of that simultaneous order by which Divine, celestial, and spiritual truth, as objects of successive order, are adjoined ; from which it is easy to see how the first, or highest sentiments respecting Divine things, are extended to the last or lowest, and how it is, that in the last, they are complete and full.

These ideas concerning the Scriptures necessarily arise out of the admission that they are Divine productions. As an emanation of wisdom from the infinite, and adaptation of that wisdom to the apprehension of finite states in man, it seems plain that the celestial, spiritual, and natural truths of the Word must have proceeded from the Divine, in successive order ; and it is equally plain, that each of those degrees of truth must be adjoined to the other by simultaneous order.

We have spoken of celestial and spiritual truths being within the letter of the Scriptures, because the existence of such senses

is consequent on the argument we have been pursuing. As a Revelation was first given to a celestial, and afterwards to a spiritually-minded people : as in each case it was suited to their genius and did not pass away when they declined : as upon that decline it was transferred to a new basis, in order that it might be serviceable to an inferior people, when, by their regeneration, those lost superior states should be redeveloped : — as these facts have really occurred, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that the literal form of the Scriptures must contain the senses of which we have spoken ; but this conclusion may be proved from other facts and considerations.

It is this peculiarity of the Scriptures, which causes them to differ from every other written composition. We have no notion of treating them as critics have treated Livy and Thucydides. They must be viewed from another point, and handled by another sentiment. If they are the Word of God, they are the work of God, and therefore, they will not display all they possess upon their surface. The Lord spake as never man spake,* because he thought as never man thought ; His words are spirit and life, (John vi. 63,) because they proceed from Him who is the true spirit and the only life. These sentiments are, predicable of every thing that he has uttered, whether proceeding immediately from Himself, or through instruments selected for the purpose. The Divine mind must be as certainly impressed upon the simplest expression of his word, as in the profoundest sentiment, in like manner as the Divine hand is as visible in the construction of an insect, as it is in the creation of the universe. By means of the Scriptures, the Lord has sent down his wisdom for the edification of men in spiritual things ; they therefore contain, within a worldly covering, spiritual and undying truths. In this respect they are analogous to man, who contains within a physical body, a spiritual and immortal soul. If the Scriptures were not thus distinguished, how could they communicate to man that interior wisdom which is necessary for the reception of his soul below, and which he is, doubtless, intended to retain in the life above ? As the Word of God, it must be adequate to this purpose, and so the letter must contain an inner sense. It can hardly be pretended, that the worldly history of so debased a nation as the Jews, will constitute the theme of man's intellectual joy in the

* John vii. 46. It is true, that this is said of the Lord Jesus Christ : but He is the personal manifestaion of the Supreme, and this is His "new name," intended to express the new aspect, under which Jehovah presented himself to the world, when the "fulness of time" had come. It is hence that He and the Father are one, (John x. 30) that He has all the fulness of the God-head bodily, (Col. ii. 9) is the true God and eternal life, (1 John v. 20) the only wise God our Savior (Jude 25).

heavenly world; and yet it must be admitted, that it has been provided for our use below, to secure for us some advantage in our state above. This advantage then, must lie in those spiritual sentiments of love and faith, which that history has been selected to represent and signify; it is these which are to form the groundwork of our supernal happiness; and is not this a proof, that the Scriptures must contain an inner sense?

Men have doubted the existence of such a sense, because they have lost the spirituality for which it is intended; a recultivation of this principle, will be attended with a fuller perception of this truth respecting the Scriptures. The literal expressions of the Word are, as it were, the closings of its spiritual thought; so that a single word proceeding from the Divine, will admit of being opened again and again, and of being shown to contain ideas more and more interior, according to the state of him who views them.

The Word is not that which "man's wisdom teacheth:" "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned: but he that is spiritual discerneth them." (1 Cor. ii. 13-15.) Two facts are thus evident, namely, the existence of spiritual things in the Word, and the necessity of a spiritual state on the part of man, to see and know them. The same ideas were recognized by the Psalmist, who, when praying to the Lord, said, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." (Psalm cxix. 18.) The outward expressions are found to contain interior thoughts, as the eyes are opened to see beneath the veil and limits of the letter. This opening of the eyes is effected by means of regeneration; for that process will produce, upon man's mental sight, effects somewhat similar to those which the microscope is found to induce upon his natural vision. To the unassisted eye, innumerable things in nature appear only as a spot, but through the aid of glasses, we discover in them a variety of structures, all arranged with superhuman skill: and each particular part, on being examined with a lens having an additional power, will be found to possess new wonders to astonish and instruct us. Something similar takes place with man's mental vision through regeneration. That process may, in some respects, be considered as a spiritual microscope, which will assist man in viewing the amazing structure of every particular expression of the Word: and every successive stage of that important process, is as an additional lens placed upon that spiritual instrument, to enable him to behold the more interior wisdom by which it is distinguished. It is a Divine canon laid down by the Lord himself,

that we must become principled in good, in order to enter intellectually into the sanctuary of truth. "If" said he, "any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.) If men would know the doctrines of truth, and see their author to be God, they must qualify themselves for these purposes by an obedience to his laws. They who do this, are His disciples, and "to them it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand." (Mark iv. 11, 12.) It is the spiritual sentiments contained within the literal records of the Word, which constitute its divinity. "The letter," says the apostle, "killeth, but the spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) The letter, if viewed apart from its spiritual contents, differs but little from the language and writings of men, but when it is looked at in connection with its internal sense, it is perceived to be sacred and Divine. In this respect, it is like the person of the Lord Jesus Christ when manifest in the world, and who, thereupon, was declared to be the Word. (John i. 1-14.) If He is contemplated merely as to that bodily aspect which was seen by the natural eyes, there is little to distinguish Him from the condition of ordinary men; but when He is regarded as to those works and sayings, which prove that He came down from heaven to give life unto the world, (John iii. 13; vi. 33, 51,) we are enabled to recognize the Divinity of His character and person.

It is plain that the Scriptures, as the Word of God, must be essentially different from the word of man. As they are designed to express to man, as a spiritual being, the ideas and intentions of an infinite mind, they must contain an inner sense. Their origin and subject necessitate this conclusion. Their divinity must be within, since it is evident that humanity is upon the surface. There can be no exception to this rule. The plainest precept, the most perspicuously written history, as well as the figuratively spoken prophecy, must involve spiritual arcana: if they do not, how do they differ from human compositions, and on what principle, satisfactory to the philosophic mind, can their divinity be defended? Without this inner sense, the Scriptures would have but little efficacy in promoting the conversion and salvation of men. It is this sense, though it has not been always seen, which has contributed to their safety in the world; this, also, is the true seat of the Word's holiness, because thereby it is in connection with heaven, and affords the medium through which angelic minds can communicate with the minds of men, to impress upon them states of spiritual security. That such a

communication takes place is abundantly asserted in the Word ; * nor is it entirely beyond the experience of the generality of men. Every one may see that the Word of God, although brought down to the apprehension of men, is still in connection with himself, and thus a means for preserving the mind of man in a state of conjunction with the mind of God. Moreover, the written Word is the resting-place, which the Divine wisdom has provided for itself in the natural world ; without this, it would have no intellectual dwelling-place in man, and doubtless this is requisite for our spiritual safety and instruction.

It is amazing, that men should feel any hesitation about acknowledging the letter of the Bible to contain an inner sense ; since this sense necessarily arises out of the circumstance of its being serviceable to man, both as a natural and a spiritual being ; thus, to his condition above, as well as to his requirements below. It is a characteristic which obviously belongs to a written Word, which has God for its author ; it seems inseparable from the fact of its being a Revelation from Him ; nor, without it, can the idea of its Inspiration be satisfactorily maintained. It is a distinguishing Peculiarity of the Bible ; but further considerations, with evidence and illustrations respecting it, will appear in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER V.

THE LAW OF SCRIPTURE WRITING AND IN WHAT CONSISTS ITS REVELATION AND INSPIRATION.

ARGUMENT. — The necessity for an inner sense in the Scriptures, admitted for many ages in the Christian Church. Why the idea has been discountenanced in modern times. Dr. Maclaine's censure not supported by facts. Not to be denied because mistakes have been made respecting it. The letter of the Scriptures selected according to a spiritual law. All natural things representative of Divine conceptions. Illustrations from the works of men. The connection between material nature and the Divine, effected by the law of discrete degrees. Mythology and hieroglyphics, evidences that such a law was understood by the ancients. Qualifications for determining the grammatical sense of the letter different from those required for the perception of its spiritual sense. Why the Scriptures are written so as to require explanation. Rule for the interpretation founded on the law of correspondence. Examples. All that is said of the Divine character to be

* "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." — Psalm xxxiv. 7. "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." — Psalm xci. 11. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." — Luke xv. 10. "Are they (the angels) not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ?" — Heb. i. 14.

interpreted in consistency with the statement "God is love." Persons representative. Revelation and Inspiration of the Scriptures imply an inner sense. Confusion exists upon these two points. Dr. Hind's assertion that some of the Scriptures contain no Revelation, and often no religious truth. The doctrine of degrees of Revelation invented to avoid denying Revelation to some parts of the Word. The merely literal sense not the constituent of Revelation. The Prophets' assurance that what they wrote came from God, a personal matter. The Scriptures to be received as Divine Revelation on other criteria. The case of Moses slaying the Egyptian, cited. Difficulties of the letter; how to be removed. The words of Scripture chosen under the influence of Divine direction. The inner sense of that history. The Revelation in the letter obscure. The plainest literal statements involve another sense. An inner sense inseparable from the true idea of inspiration. Inspiration of the writers different from the inspiration of the Scriptures. The state of inspiration induced upon the writers with their rational consent. Much of what constitutes the letter of the Scriptures known to the writers by ordinary means of information. Why inspiration is predicated of it. An idea as to how the writers were *moved* to write Divine things. The idea of inspiration of the Scriptures requires that it should be extended to the selection of the words. How this comports with the different styles of writing. Evidence that the Bible is an inspired composition apart from the inspiration of the writers. The internal evidence, as popularly understood, not the evidence inquired after. The Scriptures inspired because they have a spiritual sense which connects them with the spiritual world, and a literal sense which connects them with the natural world.

It is conceded by Biblical critics, that the Scriptures must, in a variety of cases, contain an inner sense. The figurative language of their prophecies; the singular circumstances indicated in their histories; together with the peculiarities of worship which the Lord directed for the observance of the Jewish people, have led to this result. There are points in each of these departments of the Bible, which are not intelligible without the aid of such a principle. But if the Divine has, in some cases, so spoken, as plainly to indicate that there must be another meaning than that which the letter expresses, why may not this be the universal characteristic of His Word? Why should such an idea be conceded only to the obscure portions of it? Surely a plain statement of the letter, when employed by the Supreme Mind, may be made the continent of a spiritual idea, with as much propriety as any mysterious collocation of words. A figurative language may be required for the outward indication of certain classes of spiritual thought, but what is there to hinder other classes of it from being contained within a plainer utterance? We do not — we cannot conceive that any portion of the written media which God has employed to convey a knowledge of his will to man, is destitute of an inner sense. We do not see how any writing can be His Word without it; to us, it seems indispensable to the proof of its authorship.

This doctrine has been admitted in all ages of the Christian

Church, and many of its most distinguished scholars have undertaken its defence.* But while they have seen, as a general principle, that the Word of God must contain a spiritual sense, they do not appear to have been acquainted with that law of Scripture writing, the knowledge of which is requisite for its consistent explanation. It is true, that a considerable number of their expositions could be cited, in which approximations to a correct interpretation have been made, nevertheless, they have sprung out of a lively fancy or ingenious conjecture, rather than from any fixed principle. The absence of this, on the one hand, and the wild interpretations to which an unbridled imagination has given rise on the other, have led some critics of later times to discountenance the whole idea. Dr. Maclaine observes, "that Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and indeed the whole philosophical tribe, could not fail to obtain for their sentiments, a place in the gospel, when it was interpreted by the wanton inventions of fancy, and upon the supposition of a hidden sense, to which it was possible to give all sorts of forms. Hence all who desired to model Christianity according to their fancy, or their favorite system of philosophy, embraced Origen's method of interpretation." (Note to Mosheim, cent. iii. chap. 3.) This is rather an exaggeration than a correct view of the case; it rests on prejudice and not on facts. We do not find that any of the Christian writers in the early ages of the Church, adopted the idea of a hidden sense in the Scriptures, from the unworthy motives which are thus ascribed to them. They saw that such a sense was necessary to the idea of Divine things being expressed in human language. They might, and doubtless did, frequently mistake what that sense was, but we cannot suppose that they intended, by their spiritual expositions, to betray Christianity into the hands of selfishness and vain philosophy. "A hidden sense to which it is possible to give all sorts of forms," cannot be the inner sense of the Scriptures. That sense, when rightly developed, will not permit Christianity to take any other "model" than that which is correct and proper for it. It is a safe director, and for the want of it, the Church has frequently gone astray. There is much in popular Christianity which that sense will help to correct. The acknowledgment of it is requisite to remove its

* It prevailed in the Christian Church from the earliest times, having, as is supposed, been suggested by the example of the Platonic Jews. Origen, in the third century, adopted it with much earnestness, and advocated it with force and eloquence. Mosheim says, "a prodigious number of interpreters both in this (the third century,) and succeeding ages, followed the method of Origen, though with some variation." — *Ecd. His.* cent. iii. chap. 3. § 6. "A spiritual method of interpreting the Scriptures did universally prevail in the church from the beginning." — Bishop Horne's preface to his *Com. on the Psalms*.

worldliness and complete the system. Is such a sense to be denied, because ignorance may have made mistakes respecting its true character? Certainly so plain an idea, as that the Word of God is essentially different from the word of man; — so evident a truth as that He, who is a spirit, must utter spiritual sentiments through the natural terms by which he communicates with men — is not to be abandoned because men have attempted to illustrate the proposition without the necessary rule. We do not conclude that there is no sheepfold, because certain persons may have attempted to enter it by some improper way. Why then should we doubt the existence of a spiritual sense in the Scriptures, because error and failure have sometimes attended the efforts to discover it? Although the lawyers may have taken away the key of knowledge, they have not destroyed the reminiscence of its existence. Some idea respecting the inner sense has always prevailed: Men feel — the Church feels — that the Scriptures must be a depository of something more for our edification than that which is commonly taught.* Why may not the key to their spiritual contents be again restored? Past failures afford no argument against future success: they teach us what to avoid in subsequent efforts, but do not close the inquiry. We learn from such miscarriages that the truth may lie in some other direction. And if it is entirely beyond the reach of our ordinary powers, may we not suppose that the Divine will make it known to us?

Now while the existence of an inner sense in the Scriptures seems to us as plain a truth as any other which they express, we feel assured that the letter, by which it is intended to be conveyed to the world, must have been chosen in conformity with some spiritual law. It cannot be supposed, that the subjects with which the Scriptures abound, and the expressions employed for their enunciation, were arbitrary or accidental selections. Some Divine reason must have directed such a choice. And this seems to be indicated by the apostle, when he says “the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” (Rom. i. 20.)

Every thing in nature must have arisen out of some spiritual cause, and, more or less remotely, it must have descended from the moral and intellectual attributes of God. Therefore, all

* “All our information of things that are Divine must be conveyed through an indirect channel. Through the medium of this necessary expedient alone, we are rendered capable of receiving the mysteries of religion, which, in condescension to the apprehension and capacity of man, the Deity hath graciously and abundantly employed.” — *Chart and Scale of Truth*. *Bampton Lectures*, by Dr. Tatham, vol. 2, p. 222.

things which exist around us must be the representations of some moral sentiment and intellectual conception belonging to the Divine mind.* This idea may be somewhat illustrated by what takes place with man and his works. Whatsoever he produces, whether it be an object of art, science, or handicraft, is a visible symbol of the idea as it existed in the producer, and that idea is represented by it in the most complete and perfect way. Nor is this all, for even the use for which such an object is designed, shows that there were present in the mind of the workmen, certain moral sentiments respecting it, and of which that use is expressive. Thus the *object* produced, exhibits the *idea*; and the *uses* of the object, discloses the *moral*. In this we think there is a forcible analogy to the Divine and His works.

The animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms, with all their distinct variety, must have sprung out of distinct ideas in the Divine mind; and as each particular object must have been intended for some specific use in the wide range of physical creation, it seems plain that those *objects* and *uses* must be in correspondence with some specific idea and moral in the Divine character. Thus every object on which the human eye can direct its vision, or to which the hand can extend its touch, is really the symbol of some distinct thought and moral pertaining to the Supreme Being. It is admitted that the universe, considered in its complex, demonstrates that God is essential love and wisdom, because these attributes exist in symbol in it; but every particular object of the universe proves the same fact, in reference to some specific act of wisdom and design of love.†

Nor is this all; those created objects must also represent some sentiment or feeling, that either has been or may be present with man. That which is love and wisdom in God, becomes, by reception, what is called goodness and truth with man. If then,

* "The philosophical principle, on which they (the ancients) have proceeded is this—that all matter or universal nature must, of necessity, be the form and visible idea of the essence or spirit within. Each object in religion has thus its corresponding sign and character in one of nature, and those of nature, in return, are held in esteem and reverence from their consecration to the uses of religion. The extent indeed to which this system was carried in Egypt has at all times been proverbial."—*Scripture Studies*, by the Rev. Wm. Hill Tucker, M. A., Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.

† "The subject of Revelation, and the omniscience of the Author, give it this commanding advantage over all allusions or illustrations ministered by material things and actions. The figures adduced can never emulate, in dignity, and perfection, the spiritual things they describe; though as to justness, they answer as the powers of the body to the faculties of the mind, the former being always faithful and obedient ministers, expressing to the life, the intentions of the latter."—*The Creation the Groundwork of Revelation, and Revelation the Language of Nature*, p. 38. Anonymous, Edinburgh, 1750.

every object in orderly nature, is primarily, the symbol of some peculiar activity of the Divine love and wisdom, it must, secondarily, be the representation of some specific display of human goodness and truth. This seems to be the necessary sequel to the premises; and it explains to us the ancient maxim, "that all things in the universe have relation to goodness and truth." They have this relation because they are the outbirths of the love and wisdom of God.

In these facts, we clearly see that there exists a law, by which the outer things of the universe are related to the affection and intelligence of the Creator, and this is the law, according to which we conceive the Supreme to have delivered his written Revelation to the world. That a written composition might be constructed upon this law, seems evident; for what is it? It is simply this — certain visible objects are spoken of by God, to represent and signify certain conditions of love and wisdom, or goodness and truth, to which they are related, and of which he is desirous that man should be well informed; and also, that certain other objects are spoken of by Him, in the same way, to represent and signify the evil and false to which they are related, and which He is solicitous that man, by knowing, should avoid. The objects employed to denote the former, are selected from those classes of existences which are good and useful to man; and those which are engaged to signify the latter, are chosen from these other classes of existences, which are noxious and hurtful to him. Consequently, the outer expressions, so far as they indicate natural objects, are what constitute the letter of the Scriptures, while the good and the true, or the evil and the false, with which they are connected, are those spiritual things which constitute their inner sense. These are the things concerning which a Revelation is required; the literal sense belongs to the things of this world, but the spiritual sense, to the things of the spiritual world. And is it not plain, as no one knows the nature of the relationship adverted to but the Lord, that none but He could cause a book to be written according to the above law? If, then, the Scriptures are so written, and we verily believe they are, then they carry with them the highest possible evidence of their Divine origination, — an evidence, before which every other sinks into comparative imperfection. It will be observed, that this is not the fanciful analogy of the Poet, nor the figure or metaphor of the Rhetorician, but a Divine law, in which spiritual things are indicated by means of their corresponding natural objects. Whatsoever proceeds from the Divinity, when it comes into outward nature, must manifest itself in corresponding outward things, and these become the depositories of what is Divine, celestial, and spiritual; those principles lie

concealed within these outer things, and constitute their inner sense.

Although this law of connection between the outer things of the universe and the Supreme Being is obvious, it is to be remarked, that the connection is not by continuous, but by *discrete degrees*. If material nature were a continuous emanation from the Divine, it would be Divine, and then Pantheism would be true. But this absurd result is put aside by the existence of discrete degrees; for this shows that creation is a distinct thing from the Creator; thus, that the Divine created the celestial, and by means of the celestial the spiritual, and by means of the spiritual the natural; so that the Divine, celestial, spiritual and natural are distinct degrees of existence, each being continuous in its own sphere. Thus each degree is a distinct order of existence from the other, and governed by different laws, though there is a mutual correspondence between them all. This may be illustrated in various ways; a single instance will suffice. The individual who writes is prompted to do so by some affection of his will; this, by means of the understanding, creates the necessary thoughts, and the thoughts select from the memory the appropriate words. Now each of these acts is not only a distinct process, but it belongs to a distinct order of mental existences; and when these promptings of the affections, thoughts of the understanding, and words of the memory, are marked on paper by means of writing, they all come into another order of existence entirely distinct from all the rest. From this it may be seen, that the connection between material nature and the Divine, is effected by means of the law of discrete degrees, and consequently, that the last are representative of all that, from which they have discretely emanated.

That this law was, in some measure, understood by the ancients is evident, from their mythologies and hieroglyphic remains. To the people of our times, these things appear as mere obscurities, though it must be acknowledged that they had a significance among those by whom they were employed; * and that it was different from that which the letter expresses, no one professes to deny. There are strong reasons for believing, that the knowledge of the above law was cultivated among the ancients as the chief of all sciences, and that they were enabled to consecrate natural things to the uses of religion, because they perceived

* "Perhaps, within the whole compass of mythology, there is no system more plausible than the Grecian. The coherence betrays art and arrangement, but weakness in the main incidents. A basis however, it undoubtedly possessed, which was neither of an inventive nor fictitious character. What that basis was, is certainly not to be eliminated from either poet, logographer, or historian, independent of extraneous aids." — Pococke's *India in Greece*, p. 2.

the moral and spiritual things to which they corresponded. The knowledge of these truths has long been lost to the Church, and hence arises all that indecision and uncertainty which are experienced in reference to Scripture interpretation. A period, however, is now arriving, in which a redevelopment of this knowledge is to be effected. It has been commenced by the writings of the illustrious Swedenborg, to whose *Arcana Cœlestia*, *Apocalypse Revealed*, and other remarkable and laborious works, the reader is earnestly referred for illustrative details.

When we see that the Scriptures are written according to a definite law, a desideratum is attained in biblical criticism. We may bring to such criticism correct knowledge of the antiquities of the Jewish and other nations mentioned in the Bible, and be familiar with their language, literature, and arts; we may be versed in their history, geography, and philosophy, and possess many other qualifications requisite to determine the grammatical signification of the letter; but all this, though exceedingly valuable, does not show us the law, by which the letter has been selected, and by the knowledge of which its spirit is to be unfolded. This law will afford a rule for a uniform and correct interpretation, *i. e.*, for bringing out the inner sense of the letter. Without the knowledge of such a principle, to guide our judgment in the explanation of a composition so various in its subjects, and so diverse in its literal structure, it is impossible that we can arrive at any satisfactory conclusion respecting its Divine character; hence it is, that no uniform result has been attained, and that multitudes of different explanations had been produced. Celebrated churchmen have conceded that some portions of the Scriptures were written in accordance with some law, because they have adopted certain rules for their exposition,* but none

* Sir Isaac Newton remarks, "The figurative language of the Prophets is taken from the analogy between the world natural, and an empire or kingdom considered as a world politic."—*Observations on Prophecy*, part i. chap. 2. Dr. Warburton says, "The old Asiatic style, so figurative, seems, by what we find of its remains in the prophetic language of the sacred writings, to have been evidently fashioned to the mode of ancient hieroglyphics, both curiologic and tropical."—*Divine Legation*. Book iv. § 4. The instances adduced by the former to illustrate his views, are without any general force. He supposes that one natural thing is mentioned simply as the figure of another natural thing. Thus, that the sun is named for kings, the stars for princes, and the moon for the common people. That this mode of speaking did exist among the later Asiatics is very clear, but it was not "the old Asiatic style," as Warburton supposes, nor was it that of the "ancient hieroglyphics, either curiologic or tropical." Those styles put natural objects as the representative of spiritual ideas. Hence Dr. Van Mildart has observed, that "the terms *spiritual* and *mystical* stand in contradiction to both these terms *literal* and *figurative*. They impart, besides, the direct and immediate signification of the passage, whether literally or figuratively expressed, there is to it a more recondite sense"—a sense founded,

of them have been received with general approbation. The reason is, because they are not adequate to the purpose for which they were intended — they are scholastic rules to which the Divine teachings cannot yield a uniform obedience. It is not reasonable to suppose that God has given his Word without a rule, or that he has left the rule for its interpretation to the discovery of men. If men interpret the Word according to rules invented by themselves, we can have no certainty that such explanations are expressive of God's meaning.* All that is evident in such a case is, that God's Word is attempted to be explained by man's rule. This cannot be satisfactory, because that meaning which is arrived at by man's rule, is *man's*, and not *God's*. Hence it has pleased the Lord, not only to make known that his Word is written according to a distinct law, but also to declare what that law is : and it has been done in these our days, because the minds of men have, by a series of Providences, been in some measure prepared to comprehend it.

Some may ask, why the Scriptures, if they are the Word of God, were not written so as to require no explanation — why is it that they are not plain to all minds alike ? These queries may be disposed of in a single sentence. Spiritual things cannot be expressed to natural minds, but by natural mediums. Moreover, each mind has an individuality, which not only distinguishes it from every other, but which is itself continually changing. It is therefore evident, that a literal vehicle, not requiring explanation, could not be advantageously employed for the enunciation of heavenly truths. The Divine must, as it were, speak in cipher to the human. Nor need this be a stumbling block in the way to a right understanding of what He says, when we have learned that the law for its interpretation is contained within the Scriptures themselves.

Every one may see that the rule for interpretation must be founded on the law of the composition. To ascertain the inner sense of any passage, we must first understand the law, and by

not on a transfer of words from one signification to another, but on the entire application of the matter itself to a different subject." — *Bampton Lectures*, p. 222.

* "If it be asked, whether the Bible be really different from the *interpretation* put upon it by the various denominations of professing Christians, it may be answered : — were it not so, how could all the sects find Scripture in direct refutation of each other's notions ? And how could the Bible, consistent in itself, sanction all, and refute all ; did they not, in different points, all without exception, misunderstand it ?" — *Facts Authentic in Science and Religion*, by the Rev. Wm. Coward, p. 3. preface. "The qualification for a good interpretation of the Bible is — the knowledge of some fixed rule or Principle, by which we may direct our judgment amidst the discordant interpretations of Biblical commentators." — *Criticism and Interpretations of the Bible*, by Dr. Herbert Marsh, p. 28.

this we shall be instructed in the rule. We will endeavor to illustrate this by means of examples.

It is written, "the mountains and hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." (Isaiah lv. 12.) Here it is plain, that the meaning is very different from what is expressed. Mountains and hills do not sing, nor have the trees any hands to clap. Why then were such terms selected? Were they chosen for the sake of rhetorical force, and adopted for literary effect? These things can hardly be supposed, because they would not sufficiently distinguish the composition from mere poetic writing. If these sentences are of Divine construction, then the terms must have been selected on some principle. To regard them as mere figures of speech, does not explain their meaning. To consider them as fanciful expressions, leaves them open to a fanciful interpretation, and suggests no guide by which to determine their signification. But the law which we have indicated, requires that the terms of the sentences, and of all others which have a Divine authorship, should have been selected upon some principle — a principle which demands that such things should be named, solely on the ground of their having some relation to interior and spiritual sentiments. From this law (as exemplified in the letter of the Scriptures where similar terms occur,) we learn that mountains and hills denote love and charity; these things are spiritual elevations in the religious character; and by their breaking forth into singing, is signified spiritual rejoicing occasioned by the presence of those principles. The trees are representative of man, bearing the fruits of intelligence and virtue; the tree of life is his affection, and the tree of knowledge is his faith, and by clapping of their hands is denoted delight, on account of the power of good and truth; for the hands are the emblems of this power with man in order, the right hand, the power which is derived from good, and the left hand the power derived from truth.

The apposite character of these significations is very apparent. The same may be said of a multitude of others, when their natural meaning is translated into a spiritual idea. It may appear as if those significations had their grounds in certain analogies, rather than in the discernment of any relation between the natural things and spiritual sentiments. The reason is, because such analogies are more visible to the natural mind; whereas, the relation is perceptible chiefly by the spiritual mind. Nevertheless, the existence of such a relation is not entirely hid from our reason. We may easily see that mountains and hills have been raised in nature by some principles in the Divine wisdom, and from some moral sentiment in the Divine character — moral,

even if they were for no other purpose than to diversify the landscape ;— still, the precise quality of such principles and moral, together with their relation to those eminences in nature, are more particularly the subjects of perception. Science can render eminent services in the production of analogies, by which we may see the fitness of some things natural, to represent other things spiritual. Reason can show us resemblances between certain physical objects and spiritual ideas ; between historical transactions and moral sentiments, still it requires an interior perception to see the relation or mutual correspondence which exists between them. Nor is this fact of the inner sense of the Scriptures embarrassed by this circumstance. It seems consequent on their Divine character, that their most interior principle should be seen by the inmost order of intellect. Every one knows, that there are a variety of points pertaining to the spiritual things of genuine religion, which are placed in the same position. Take, for instance, the ideas of life after death, heaven and hell. It is seen from some inner light that these things are ; we feel the strongest assurance as to their realities, and this furnishes the interior of our minds with a moral certainty respecting them, quite as great as any other kind of evidence could supply.

But although the spiritual mind may perceive that the ground of the above, and all other spiritual significations, is laid in the law of correspondence ; and while reason and science may enable us to confirm their accuracy from many satisfactory analogies, there is one general point of view, from which all may be convinced of their correctness, and that is, the letter of the Scriptures, in which the same words, in similar subjects, occur ; and thus the Scriptures are made their own interpreter. This indeed, is a principle to be invariably adhered to : for all the doctrines of the church, consequently all its interpretations of the Scriptures, must be drawn from their literal sense and confirmed thereby. The doctrine that the Word contains a spiritual sense is expressly declared in the letter. "*My words*" said the Lord "*are spirit and life.*" The spiritual explication of every term, is a doctrine which must be similarly confirmed. For example. To ascertain the inner sense of any passage, it is requisite in the first place, to observe the character of the general subject with which it is connected ; whether it treats of something that is desirable and good, or of something that is calamitous and evil. There will be no difficulty in doing this. It is next necessary to compare the terms of the passage with the same terms in other passages treating of similar subjects, and bring what is seemingly obscure in one, into consistency with what is certainly plain in another. Thus we read, "Ho,

every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters," (Isaiah lv. 1.) and we wish to know the precise idea, which the term "waters" is intended to express. We at once see that the subject treated of concerns our welfare, and that the particular advantage which is pointed at, is expressed by the term waters; to ascertain what that advantage is, we refer to other passages, the general subjects of which relate to our welfare, and in which the same term occurs. Among these, we find some in which the word, like that in the passage before us, is simply employed as the symbol of some enjoyment, such as, "He leadeth me beside the still waters;" also, that He gives "living water" to those who ask Him, and invites all to "drink of the water of life freely;" and from this it will become plain, that by waters are signified truths — truths as they are expressed in the letter of the Word. By this process of study, the waters to which we are invited, cease to be regarded as a mere figure of some vague enjoyment, and we see them to be a Divinely chosen emblem of a definite idea — an emblem which reveals to us the moral principle to which the natural element is related. Having ascertained the signification of the term, it is to be adhered to as the inner sense of it, in every situation, in which it is found in connection with subjects treating of our welfare.* It will always be observed to present an intelligible and practical interpretation. It matters not whether it is met with in plain history, obscure prophecy, or simple poetry; the application of the inner sense will enlighten the passage, and illuminate the context in a most surprising and instructive way. The same process is to be pursued with other words, and the like results will follow. This, then, seems a plain and simple rule.

So again, all those acts which the Scriptures ascribe to the Deity, must be so interpreted as to agree with the great fact, that "God is love." This, because "He changes not," is His unalterable character. When, therefore, He is said to be angry, and is represented as doing that which is not consistent with the above essential principle of His nature, it is to be understood as asserting man's idea of Him, under some dark and unfavorable circumstances.

The persons too, who are mentioned in the Word, are repre-

* We say subjects treating of our welfare, because the same term changes to an opposite meaning, when an opposite subject is treated of. Thus the Psalmist says, "save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul," lxxix. 1. And again, "if it had not been the Lord who was on our side — then the waters had overwhelmed us — the proud waters gone over our soul," cxxiv. 1-5; where it is evident, that by waters are signified false principles. This change of meaning, with the change of subject, is no embarrassment to the rule. Falsehood seems as truth to the evil, and hence it is represented by the same object that truth is to the good. Most terms in the Scriptures have this opposite signification.

sentative of some living spiritual principles: for the scheme of Revelation must ever keep spiritual things in view. Hence their names, in the languages to which they originally belong, are expressive of ideas and things. It was customary with the ancients to give names to their children, which should indicate some prominent points or circumstances connected with their birth. This is evident, from those which were given to the sons of Jacob. We also find that names were sometimes changed by the express direction of God. The occurrence of such cases to Abram, Sarai, and Jacob, will be familiar to every one. (See Gen. xvii. 5. 15; xxxii. 28.) These things must have been done for the sake of the different representations, which those persons were intended to sustain in the Divine Word. Moreover, there are numerous instances in which personal names are expressed, where it is evident that persons are not meant. For instance, it is thus written, "David my servant shall be king over them — my servant David shall be their prince forever;" (Ezekiel xxxvii. 24, 25;) and again "the children of Israel shall return and seek David their king." (Hosea iii. 5.) Now David, at the time those statements were written, had long been dead; and if he had been living, it is evident that he could not have been an everlasting prince: it follows therefore, that the name of David has been employed to represent some spiritual idea, altogether apart from his person as a king. The same is true of all other names; for if not, of what use are many passages, nay of several chapters, in which scarcely any thing else than names occur? (See Isaiah x. 24, 26, to 34, and Gen. xxxvi, and xlv, and Exodus vi.) From these, if we deny that they have any spiritual sense, no intelligible meaning can be gathered: and without looking for some inward signification in them, and finding it, it will be difficult to sustain the idea and belief of such passages being the Word of God.

Without dwelling longer on the general proposition, that the Scriptures contain an inner sense, and that it is represented by the letter according to the law of correspondence, there are other considerations which seem to necessitate these conclusions. These belong to the Revelation and Inspiration of the Word.

Upon these subjects, no little confusion has long existed in the church. The literature which has been produced to explain them is extensive, but it has not resulted in the production of any uniform opinion respecting them. It would be difficult to say what is received as orthodoxy on these points. Numerous hypotheses have been advanced; and some of them are put forth with ingenuity and learning, but what a chaos is observable when we venture to examine their application to details! It is easy to say in general terms, that the Bible is an inspired

book, and that it contains a Revelation from God, but how are the ideas which those words express, predicable of a large amount of the matter contained within its merely grammatical sense? Our education, and common Christianity, require that it should be so considered, but if we have no just views of Revelation and Inspiration, we cannot avoid embarrassment and doubt, when applying those terms to very much that is contained in the letter of the Scriptures. Without these views, our profession to believe may be a prejudice, and our prejudice an error. Distinguished writers have withdrawn the application of those terms from several portions of the Bible. A modern prelate of the English church says, "the Jews had no literature but the Scriptures: and God was not only their Supreme Governor, but their national Preceptor. By means of those parts of the Proverbs, the Psalms, and Prophets, *which, conveying no Revelation, often no religious truth*, are merely valuable for the acute judgment or the poetic imagination displayed — by means of these, the national taste and mode of thinking received such a moulding as was best suited for the teaching of the Messiah when he came." * This is certainly a remarkable statement from such a quarter, still, few who have thought and written on the subject, with no other notions of Revelation and Inspiration than what are apparent on the letter, can have avoided a similar conclusion.† The Bishop tells us, there are "parts of the Proverbs, Psalms, and Prophets which contain no Revelation — often no religious truth," and that by those very parts, the Jewish character was best prepared for receiving the teachings of the Messiah! Surely we need not do more to expose these errors than direct attention to them. The notion, that a people's taste and thinking were most suitably moulded for the appreciation of Christianity, by documents having no religion or Revelation in them, must be its own refutation. It presumes that uninspired writings were more effective for such a purpose, than those which are admitted to possess that excellence, and that man's acute judgment and poetic imagination were more valuable in such a work, to such a people, than God's Word!

The hypothesis which removes Revelation from parts of the Psalms and Prophets, is more commonly entertained than openly expressed. Most of the theories extant either demand this sacrifice, or reduce the ideas of Revelation and inspiration to a

* Dr. Hinds, Bishop of Norwich. *Rise and Early Progress of Christianity. Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, p. 305.

† Hence Eichorn, in his introduction to the Old and New Testaments, and many others of the German literati, deny any inspiration to Moses. So does Dr. Geddes. Bishop Law supposes that the writers of the Scriptures were not inspired to write all that they relate. A sentiment in which Dr. Watson, and a host of others concur.

level, not distinguishable from human imagination, or poetic teaching. The notion of higher and lower degrees of Inspiration, which involves the opinion of superior and inferior Revelation, has been invented to check the denial of Inspiration and Revelation, to certain parts of the Scriptures, and to retain within the precincts of the terms, those portions of the Divine writings which appear to be merely human and worldly. This design is laudable but defective. True ideas of the Scriptures cannot be associated with the opinion that some portions of them have more of God in them than others.

But after all, what is it that constitutes Revelation in the Scriptures? * It cannot be their merely literal or historical sense. It is true, that there are some things therein declared, which could not have been known to us, if God had not condescended to proclaim them. But these things, for the most part, relate to Spiritual subjects, such as the existence of God, the human soul, the spiritual worlds, and angels of light and darkness. Spiritual things, however, are far from being the general characteristics of the letter of the Scriptures. How very much belonging to its history seems to be nothing more than descriptions of nations and personal acts — in many instances, acts of depraved nations and profligate men: and surely, it is difficult to associate with such narrations, the idea of Revelation, considering that term to mean a Divine disclosure — a discovery which could not have been made, without the special interposition of God for its production!

It seems plain, that very much of the letter of the Scriptures might have been written by persons having the ordinary means of memory, observation, reflection, and judgment. The setting down of events which were taking place before the writers, or of such others as they might have been informed of by eye witnesses, documents or tradition, cannot be said to come within any proper meaning of the term Revelation. It may indeed be asserted, that the writers were supernaturally influenced to state only such and such events, and that they were directed in the accurate performance of it by an infallible guide. Doubtless this is true; but how is this assertion to be proved? There are some cases in which the writers tell us, that God spake to them and commanded certain things to be said and done; but while this statement may be evidence, in such instances, there are

* The object of Revelation, being to make known things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man to conceive," it seems hardly possible that the human mind should be capable of appreciating them, but through the medium of figurative language or mystical representation." — Horne's *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Scriptures*, vol. 2, pt. 2, chap. 1, § 5.

numerous others in which nothing of this sort is observable. There must then, be some other method for ascertaining that the whole Scriptures were produced under the direction of God; and that method, if it be the true one, will assist us in seeing this fact upon other grounds than the mere assertion of the writers; and so test even the truthfulness of those communications which have the prefix, "thus saith the Lord." In those cases, the writers, it is highly probable, would have the strongest possible assurance, that what they were writing was a Divine Revelation. But were they similarly assured in respect to all the other things which they have written? We are not disposed to think that this question is of much importance to us, because, after all, it could only have been a matter of private experience to them. Still we see no reason why they should not have such an assurance. If it be true, that "when God makes a prophet, he does not unmake the man," then it is to be presumed, that the men who were raised into the prophetic character were conscious of the acts and sayings which properly belonged to it. We cannot think, that when inspired, they were insensible to the condition which inspiration implies. Still, any assurances which they might have possessed respecting their own psychological condition, is a matter altogether apart from those characteristics of the Scriptures, which such a condition might have been requisite for producing. It was personal and private experience, and not general and public evidence. The claims of the Scriptures to be received as the Word of God must be judged of by other criteria, than the spiritual experience of the writers. If we fully grant that all that is contained in the Scriptures was written under the Divine influence and guidance, this will not explain, how a very large proportion of the occurrences contained in them are the Revelations of God.

For instance, a Divine afflatus induced Moses to inform us, that "when he was grown, he went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren, and he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand;" (Exodus ii. 11, 12;) but this is simply the record of a fact, in which the writer of it is the principal actor: how is it a Revelation? What does it reveal, which it required the special interposition of God to make known? To say that the mere history is the Revelation, that it could not have been produced by ordinary means, cannot supply a satisfactory answer to minds disposed to think sensibly and freely on what they are required to believe. In what sense could it have been a Revelation to Moses? He knew it precisely as we know any transaction in which we have been engaged: nor can we reasonably

suppose that it was necessary, in a subsequent period of his life, — that the Supreme Being should specially interpose, to revive in him the recollection of it. And in what sense is it a Revelation — to subsequent generations? It does not seem to express any — supernatural fact, nor to convey to us any information with — which it is essential for us to be acquainted; and yet, if it — is the Word of God, how is the apparent absence of these things from it to be accounted for? To maintain that it is a Divine Revelation, and to see these undoubted difficulties *how* it is so, can only be attributed to prejudice in favor of a *word*, shutting the eyes in ignorance of the *thing*. Nor is this reasoning — merely applicable to the case before us; it is only one of the hundreds of examples that could be produced.*

But all these difficulties lie only against the notion of Revelation being nothing more, than what arises out of the grammatical sense of the letter. They vanish when the idea of an inner sense is admitted. It is then seen, that the letter is the natural vehicle of some spiritual sentiments, and that it is these which are the Revelation, essential for us to know, and communicable to us by God alone.

The penmen of the Sacred Word "wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost:" (2 Peter i. 21 :) and they were led thereby to state such outer things, circumstances, and events, as were adequate to represent certain inner ideas which concern our spiritual nature. They were guided by an infallible intelligence to employ such facts, and to express them in such words as were best adapted to signify the spiritual things intended to be revealed. This principle not only runs through the historical records, but the prophetic, and all other forms for Revelation

* It is usual to meet difficulties of the kind above adverted to, on the theory of degrees of Inspiration. Of these, we are told there are four. — 1. The Inspiration of direction. — 2. The Inspiration of superintendency. — 3. The Inspiration of elevation, and 4. The Inspiration of suggestion. The Rev. John Dick, M. A., in his *Essay on the Inspiration of the Scriptures*, says, p. 33, "We do not apply the term Inspiration in the same sense to the whole Scriptures, because the same degree of inspiration was not necessary in the composition of every part of them. In some parts, if I may so speak, there is more of God than in others." But look at the theory of degrees of Inspiration, and apply it to the Scriptures; then some of them are more inspired than the others, consequently some are more perfect than others, some more to be relied on than others; some are all inspired, some half, some a quarter, and so on till the idea is completely banished. Wherever comparison, in reference to Divine things, is admitted, imperfection in them is conceded. If some have less of God than others, surely we may, without irreverence, ask how much Divinity there is in the least, and where does it begin? How are we to ascertain its increase, and what is the maximum? The theory of Degrees of Inspiration in attempting to avoid Scylla plunges into Charybdis. It cannot be adopted without danger to our faith in Revelation.

which it has pleased the Supreme Wisdom to adopt. Evidences of this will be afforded in future chapters of this work. What we are now stating we wish to be understood of all that is really the Word of God. The terms of Scripture, apart from their spiritual meaning, appear to be human only, and such as judicious and well-disciplined minds might have readily selected; but when they are seen to be the natural exponents of spiritual ideas, we at once perceive that they must have been of the Divine choice and arrangement, thus, that "the Spirit of the Lord spake by them and His Word was in their tongue," (2 Sam. xxiii. 2;) and this view, if carefully reflected on, would settle the whole controversy, which has so frequently been raised among biblical scholars, respecting what is called the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. It not only shows us, that the subjects were Divinely suggested to subserve a particular end, but also, that the words adopted for their expression were chosen under the influence of a Divine dictate. To doubt that they were so chosen seems to us to be a virtual abandonment of the whole question of Inspiration. From what has now been said, it appears that that which constitutes the Revelation of the Scriptures, is their spiritual sense. The letter, viewed in connection with that sense, is a Divine exponent, because its terms have been selected under the Divine guidance, in accordance with that relational law, or law of correspondence, which exists between things natural and spiritual, before alluded to.

For the sake of illustrating the principle now laid down, we will endeavor to ascertain what is the Revelation contained within the above history of Moses slaying an Egyptian and hiding him in the sand. It has been shown that the letter of that narrative does not, cannot, of itself, come within any correct meaning of the term Revelation. We do not propose to go into the analytical proof of the spiritual signification of the particular terms of the passage. It could be given from several sources; but it is *principles* rather than *details*, which we are attempting to discuss; and we think that the general explication is so plain, that the reader will either need no further proof of its correctness, or be enabled to find it for himself.

By Moses is represented the Divine truth, and by the acts of Moses, are denoted the operation of this truth upon the mind of man, during the process of regeneration. He is said to *have grown*, to signify that the Divine truth increases to the perception of the spiritual mind; *his going out to his brethren*, denotes the accommodation of Divine truth to other truths that may be in the mind, and with which it can claim fraternity; and, *by looking on their burdens*, is signified the discovery of the infestations which such truths suffer from false principles. The

slaying of an Egyptian, smiting a Hebrew, represents Divine truth detecting false principles, attempting to destroy some spiritual sentiment. For Moses to *look this way and that way*, signifies the prudence which the Divine truth inspires; and *to see no man*, denotes that no good was observable, for goodness is that which the Divine truth pronounces to be *man*. By *Moses slaying the Egyptian*, is represented the Divine truth destroying the false principle which rules the unregenerate mind; and by *hiding him in the sand*, is denoted its removal to where falses are, and from whence they come.*

Now, here we have a series of spiritual ideas, perfectly intelligible to those who will fairly reflect upon them; moreover, they are altogether apart from the sense of the letter, and yet fully communicated to us through its representative instrumentality. We see that the general subject, which is *revealed* in the history, relates to the operation of the Divine truth upon the mind, its efficacy to discover what is false therein, its efforts to remove the burdens which fallacy imposes, and the power of truth to destroy a lie.

Thus, the Lord, through the medium of this remarkable history, has revealed what Divine truth will do for those who receive it; and he has described the process in detail. Reason tells us, that this is a subject of which we are naturally ignorant; and also, that as belonging to a class of spiritual knowledge, the

* We can easily conceive, that a cursory reader may turn away from the above brief exposition, as some far-fetched and idle speculation; but we beseech him to pause and reflect upon it under the reasonings which have been adduced. Such a one has, most likely, been in the habit of attaching no other ideas to Scripture terms than such as are sensuous and personal, and so he is merely startled, when a purely religious idea is substituted in their place. So far he may be unprepared for the reception of a higher view: the higher view exists, notwithstanding. To what unanswerable objections is the mere letter of the above history exposed! The whole of the explication turns on the representation of Moses, the Hebrew, and the Egyptian; when these are seen, the truth of what is said of them in the above explanation, will be readily admitted. Now that *Moses* represented the Divine truth, is evident from the Lord having called His Word *Moses*; thus "they have *Moses* and the prophets." "If they hear not *Moses* and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead," Luke xvi. 29-31. That by the *Hebrew* is represented some spiritual principle in the internal man is plain, from the circumstance of the *Hebrew* church having been a spiritual dispensation before the time of *Moses* and the Jewish people: and that the *Egyptian* represented some false in the external man, appears from numerous passages of the Word, and especially the following: "*Egypt* riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof," Jer. xlv. 8; and again, "woe to them that go down to *Egypt* for help;" "the Egyptians are men and not God," Isaiah xxxi. 1-3; see also Jer. ii. 18-36; xlii. 14 to the end. Ezekiel xvi. 26; xxiii. 3; Hosae ix. 3; Psalm lxxx. 8 and following verses.

Lord only could have made it known. It thus affords one of the strongest arguments for the Divine origination of the Word. And what is true of the passage just considered, is equally so of every other portion of the Scriptures ; thus, it is the *inner sense* which constitutes their Revelation ; and the *letter* is the Divinely chosen vehicle, by which it is brought down to man. From these considerations it is plain, that the idea of Scripture Revelation, necessitates the admission of an inner sense.

Of course, we do not mean by this, that Revelation is never apparent in the letter. There are cases, as we have before said, in which it is obvious enough that a Revelation is intended. Doubtless those portions which are introduced with the declaration, " thus saith the Lord," are of this description. Still it frequently happens, that their precise character is somewhat obscure ; and therefore, commentators have differed in their interpretations. Terms occur in them, which it is evident are not to be understood in their strict grammatical sense ; and writers, in seeking for their signification, with no other rule than that which is furnished by ingenuity and conjecture, have diverged in various directions. The circumstance of the letter in such cases requiring interpretation, is a virtual acknowledgment that its Revelation is somewhat beneath the surface. But the plainest case of a Revelation being in the letter, does not at all interfere with the fact of a further Revelation being contained within. For instance, " the Lord spake to Moses," and gave directions for making the tabernacle and its furniture ; also, for the establishment of the priesthood, and the regulation of worship ; and yet how evident it is, that those literal Revelations, which had only a transitory force and application, were made for the sake of something else which lay beneath them. The apostle considered them as shadows of some spiritual reality ; he spake of them as such, and the whole of the Epistle to the Hebrews is constructed on this idea respecting those communications. Consequently, that which in the Scriptures is a Revelation to the church, and by which its spirituality is to be advanced, is their inner sense. And although Revelations do occasionally appear in the letter, they are very far from doing so in a large proportion of the history, biography, physics, and other subjects of which the letter treats. Indeed, without the idea of an inner sense, it is utterly impossible to see upon what principles such narrations can be called the Word of God. But admit this idea, and carry the law for interpretation which has been sketched, to any passage, however remote from any apparent Revelation, and a beautiful series of spiritual truths will be the result ; — truths of the utmost importance to be known, and which none but the Supreme, who knoweth what is in man, could have revealed.

Not only does the idea of Revelation necessitate the admission of an inner sense in the Scriptures, but it is also inseparable from the idea of their Inspiration. We here speak of the inspiration of the Scriptures, as something different from the inspiration of the men who wrote them. The men were temporarily inspired to produce a work that should be permanently so. Their inspiration was personal but necessary to the purpose : it was a peculiar and inordinate condition induced upon them ; the work therefore, which was produced under its influence, must also be peculiar and inordinate. An interior sense in their writings seems consequent on the interior condition of themselves. They would not have been raised into that inner state which their inspiration implies, if it had not been intended to leave the evidence of that state upon that which they were required to produce ; and that evidence must be left upon the inner, rather than upon the outer structure of the work, so that the work might bear an analogy to themselves.

Inspiration, in reference to men, denotes that they were acted upon by an extraordinary Divine influence, which taught them what they should speak and write for the instruction and advancement of the church ; and consequently, what they spoke and wrote under that influence, was not only the result of their inspiration, but was itself inspired ; *i. e.*, it was constructed so as to express extraordinary Divine and spiritual truths, from which men are to learn what is required for the edification and progress of the church.

We think that such a state was induced upon the writers with their own rational consent, and that it was entered into by them in freedom, and with delight. They were taken into the special employ of the Divine, and performed the duties of God's amanuenses with unerring precision. As such, it was not requisite that they should be acquainted with the full meaning of every thing on which they wrote. They were servants, doing the Lord's pleasure, and in all cases, they understood enough of the work in which they were engaged, to make them willing and sensible instruments. We do not suppose, that on any occasion of their writing the Word, they were unconscious of their inspired condition, or, that at any time in which they were so employed, they were ignorant of the point at which nature ended, and inspiration began. The natural operation of the human mind, and the supernatural operation of God upon it, are, we think, of too distinct a character for enlightened minds to mistake the one for the other ; and surely the inspired penmen had such minds, when they were under extraordinary Divine influence.

Very much of what constitutes the letter of the Scriptures was doubtless known to the writers by ordinary means. Moses,

the prophets, and evangelists, were present at a considerable portion of the scenes and transactions which they record. In such cases, it seems as if they might have written them without any Divine afflatus; and so they might, but if they had, the composition would not have been inspired. This, however, was the object to be obtained, and therefore the inspiration of the writer was indispensable. By this, they were not only guided to particular circumstances, and so superintended that they might commit no error; but also to write them, and all other things which they wrote as portions of the Word, in a peculiar way, using only such terms as are the natural exponents of corresponding spiritual subjects. The terms were in the ordinary memory and understandings of the men, but the Holy Spirit directed their selection and arrangement. Hence the apostles say, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and, "holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Peter i. 21.)

The precise *manner* in which they were thus "moved," cannot be described. It was a subject of individual experience with the writers, which is not recorded; still some general idea of it may be formed. That this *moving* to speak Divine things was somewhat different from that which had taken place in preceding ages, follows, we think, from the different character which had fixed itself upon the men of the prophetic times. It is true, that God is said to have spoken to the one and to the other; nor do we conceive such speaking in the one case to have been essentially different from the other. While we believe it was the Divine speaking in all cases, we conceive that there must have been some difference in the mode by which man was approached, in the different epochs of such a phenomenon, to give him sensibility of the Divine presence and purpose. Thus, in the primeval cases, it was more immediate than in the prophetic. The minds of men in the Adamic and Noetic periods were not so thoroughly closed to spiritual knowledge, as was the case with mankind at the Mosaic era, and subsequently throughout the Jewish history. It is therefore reasonable to conclude, that in the superior times, the inspiration which individuals enjoyed was more immediately from the Divine than in those times when men were more thoroughly corrupt. It seems a plain principle of Scripture, teaching that those persons who are comparatively good and wise, can be approached immediately by the Divine, and those who are not so, are to be reached through instruments. And this, we think, is applicable to the inspiration of persons in different ages. We conceive that in an orderly condition of society, an individual partaking of that condition would be inspired more directly by the Divine than another individual who was not so

favorably circumstanced, and consequently, that Moses and others, by whom the Word was written, because of the grossness of the general character of mankind which prevailed in their times, and in which they were participators, were approached by the Lord and inspired by him mediately, that is to say, through an angel filled with the Divine presence, and who, therefore, is sometimes called an angel of the Lord, God, and Lord. (Exodus iii. 2, 4, 14, 15.) Thus the inspiration of the prophets was an elevation of the interiors of their minds, to receive a dictate from the Lord through an angelic medium : * and this not only produced in them an idea of *what* they were required to write, but also the very *words*, in which they were to write it. This dictate does not always appear to have been a tranquil suggestion, but sometimes came as a voice, and at others in visions and dreams. Their *modus operandi*, so far as they are expressed, are as much distinct Revelations, as are those things which they were the means of revealing from the Lord.

We do not see how a Divine dictate could be adequately expressed, in any other terms than such as the Divine selected : nor can we suppose that such a dictate would be left to the mere utterance of men, because that is fallible ; even in expert hands, it is not always the correct exponent of human thought. If practised writers do not always succeed in representing with accuracy their own ideas, on what ground can it be supposed that the prophets and fishermen of Galilee, if left to the choice of their own words, have expressed the Divine dictates without an error. To say that such a choice was left them, and that accuracy has been invariably maintained, is virtually to abandon the notion ; for how could such a result have happened in the absence of the Divine superintendence ? The notion of inspiration being the dictate of thought only, leaving the words in which to express them, to the tastes of the writers, is not only indefensible, but full of danger. It opens the door to doubts, which neither apology nor criticism can close ; for if the language is simply man's — we have no guaranty that it is the accurate representation of the Divine will. And without such a guaranty, we cannot conceive that that will has been duly and infallibly expressed. We are, therefore, in admitting the idea of inspiration, compelled to acknowledge that it extends to those words which are requisite to the due expression of the dictate.

* It may prevent a misapprehension to remark, that the *Word*, in coming to the prophets through an angel filled with the Divine presence and aspect, was just as much God's Word to them, as it is to us who receive it through the medium of the prophets. The names *Angel of God*, or *Angel of Jehovah*, express their official capacities as messengers of the Most High, and do not refer to their personal nature.

Besides, how could Divine things be delivered to the human mind, without calling up in that mind the series of words, in which they were to exist in perspicuity and truthfulness? We think in words, nor have we any clear ideas apart from them. Let any one try to think without them, and he will soon discover his difficulty, and the necessity of having recourse to them as the instruments of mental operations. This is well known in all ordinary cases, and no reason can be assigned why they should be dispensed with in the extraordinary cases of inspiration. Hence we conclude, that the inspiration of the persons by whom the Scriptures were written, implies the action of a Divine afflatus, dictating, by angelic mediums, some spiritual ideas, which were otherwise beyond the reach of human knowledge, and calling up from their memory and understandings, those outer things and words, and giving to them that collocation which is essential to the accurate representation of such ideas in the natural world, in which every thing that exists is the exponent of something spiritual in the spiritual worlds.

It may be asked, if the words were really of the Divine selection, how are we to account for the differences of style which are observable throughout the Scriptures. This is doubtless attributable to a difference in the mental constitution of the instruments. Daylight is no less the result of sunshine because we receive it through various conditions of the atmosphere. It was no more requisite that inspiration should take away the *mental* than the *physical* individuality of the men; hence we conceive, that the Divine, in communicating his dictate, must have regarded the mental condition of the parties through whom it was to be expressed.

The Scriptures being thus produced are an inspired composition — and yet inspired in a sense different from that of the writers — different, though consequent on it, and in harmony with it. The composition must have some other commendation to our faith, besides the presumption of the writer's inspiration. They have passed away, and we cannot interrogate them respecting their states and experiences in this particular. But if they were alive, and we inquired of them concerning their profession on this subject, perhaps the whole amount of information we should procure would be simply this, — “the Word of the Lord came unto me, and I have written it in a book as he commanded.” In this case, our duty is to examine the evidence of this profession, which the book itself affords. But where shall we find it? The writers had it communicated to them in the Divine dictate which they received; but that, to them, was a personal affair. The dictate was a personal Revelation, and the state requisite for its reception was a personal Inspiration. The question with

us is, what evidence is there in the Book which they have produced, proving it to be a Divine composition? To say that it was written by inspired men, is only to assert that which was necessary for its production; it is no answer to the inquiry itself. What proof of their inspiration do their writings exhibit? We may be referred to what is called the "internal evidence," but this, when we come to inquire into its meaning, is found to be nothing more than a critical exegesis by which theologians attempt the proof of the literal statements.* This, indeed, is a most important branch of theological literature, and it has been prosecuted with eminent success, but it does not meet the point before us. It is fully admitted, that the writers of the Scriptures record a series of extraordinary circumstances, the truth of which it is impossible to deny, because they were not "done in a corner," but openly in the face of the world; some of them were celebrated by the erection of public monuments, and others commemorated by religious observances, which were attended to by a whole nation for many ages. But surely the relation of facts, however extraordinary, is no evidence of the inspiration of the writer, or of his composition. Although every thing stated in the Bible may be shown to be true and properly related, yet that is no proof, either of the inspiration of the men who wrote it, or of the work which they have produced. If the simple truth of a relation is all that is required to establish such conclusions, what is to hinder other writings, possessing a similar feature, from claiming the same dignity? It may be said, that the occurrences which the Scripture writers relate, are so essentially different from those of all other authors; and that the Divine Presence, Governance and Providence, being so generally conspicuous in them, are such as to give to their relations the exclusive claim to inspiration. But why so? Why is the narration, which tells us that Jesus gave sight to the blind, more inspired than another which should inform us of the earth's rotation on its axis? On what ground is the writer of the one fact more inspired than the penman of the other? Both facts are the Lord's doings and they are marvellous in our eyes; but why one relation, which informs us of the conferring of a temporal and personal advantage, should be inspired, and the other, which declares a permanent and general good, should not be so, is not very apparent from the theory which asserts the distinction to have its ground in the different character of the facts. Nor can the distinction be reasonably attributed to the circumstance

* See Chalmers's *Evidence and Authority of the Christian Revelation*, and Leslie's *Short and Easy Method with Deists*. Consult, also, an interesting book, translated from the French of Professor Gaussen, entitled, *It is Written*.

of some of the writers being enabled to perform occasional miracles ; if such an argument were sound, it could only be partially applied, because a large proportion of the Scripture writers and speakers did no miracles. Besides, the fact of a man being enabled to perform a miracle to-day, cannot be fairly urged as evidence that what he undertakes to write to-morrow, must be inspired.

Thus the inspiration of the Scriptures is not solely referable to the truthfulness of their relations, to the marvellousness of the circumstances which they record, to the psychological condition of the writers, or to the power of performing miracles with which some of them were occasionally endowed ; all these things might have been required to procure for the Scriptures the necessary forms and features of inspiration, but the real evidence of its existence lies in the peculiarity of the composition which relates them, and of its adaptability for containing that internal spiritual sense which is their inspiration. Inspiration denotes a breathing into. The Lord is said to have breathed into the nostrils of Adam, and he became a living soul : and afterwards, upon His disciples ; saying, receive ye the Holy Spirit ; (Gen. ii. 7 ; John xx. 22 ;) because breathing was representative of their inspiration. Hence also the anointed of the Lord, are called the breath of His nostrils : (Lamentations iv. 20 ;) men were admmissive of this inspiration or Divine breathing, because of that spiritual character and being, with which they are endowed ; and the Scriptures are receptive of the same thing, because they have a spiritual sense which connects them with the spiritual world and primarily with the Lord. The worldly things treated of in the letter are holy, only because they are the Divinely selected exponents of interior and spiritual sentiments. These are what constitute its inspiration by the Lord ; for who cannot see, that that which is inspired by Him, has descended from Him, and that in its first origin and intermediate processes of descent, it must be different from what it is in the letter, consequently not worldly, but spiritual and Divine.

Thus, although fixed by means of the letter with men on earth, it must, in consequence of its descent, be connected with heaven, where its spirituality is recognized ; hence the Psalmist said, "forever, O Lord, thy Word is settled in heaven."* "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," (2 Tim. iii. 16,) because it is thereby made the common or general vessel for the reception and communication of spiritual and imperishable

* Psalm cxix. 89. This idea, at first sight, may seem strange, but when it is remembered, that the angels can be wise, only with the Divine Wisdom, thus, through their reception of the Divine Word, the difficulty will be instantly dispelled.

knowledge, and so to promote and secure man's conjunction with the Lord. Man, having been created for God's glory, must have been designed to be the inheritor of celestial and spiritual things below, that thereby he might be prepared for the enjoyment of celestial and spiritual society above. The internal sense of the letter is the medium for this preparation. This is the sense which is adapted to the spirituality of our nature, and to abide with us forever. The letter, so far as it relates to worldly things, must needs perish upon the confines of heaven, and not form any portion of angelic meditation. For surely the "spirits of just men made perfect" do not, in their supernal abodes, investigate the worldly history and personal circumstances which are recorded in the letter. They, having passed into the internal world, have entered into a possession of those interior truths of the Word which its inner sense reveals, and by the existence of which its outer sense is a perpetually inspired composition.

CHAPTER VI.

GENUINE AND APPARENT TRUTHS IN THE BIBLE: SPECIFICALLY THOSE WHICH REFER TO THE DIVINE CHARACTER.

ARGUMENT.—The profound character of the Word: its importance to men. Objections have been taken to certain portions of it: instances adduced. The complaints of superficial minds respecting it. An argument with them. The consequence of God making a Revelation to all orders of mind. Changes in men's states produce changes in their conceptions of the Word. Illustrations by several passages. The design of the laws of retaliation among the Jews. Some passages, the genuine meaning of which, is opposite to what they express. Scripture statements respecting different appearances of the Divine. The reason for such representation founded in the adaptation of the Word to all states of men, hence it must have *apparent* as well as *genuine* truths. Several instances cited, in which natural phenomena appear the reverse of what they really are. The evidence of the senses not always to be depended upon: neither are the conclusions of the sensual mind: examples of their inaccuracy. The incongruous statements of Scripture, a consequence of the incongruity of man's condition by nature and by grace. Contradictory representations of the Divine character: both cannot be the genuine truth. The view requisite for their reconciliation. The spirit &c., of the Bible show that the real character of God is love, and therefore all opposite descriptions must be appearances. The recognition of these facts important to the establishment of true religion. The literal sense of passages not in conformity with the real character of God, is nevertheless harmonious with it in their spiritual sense. Examples explanatory of this idea. God not capable of anger, as some suppose. An examination of that notion and an exposition of its error. Nature presents nothing in support of such a supposition. The different aspects under which different states of mind view the declarations that "God is a consuming fire," "is jealous," and to be feared. Various titles under which

the Divine character is exhibited, and from which the idea of anger is excluded. If there is no anger in God, the popular doctrine of redemption and atonement must be a mistake. What these doctrines are in *note*. Love — the infinite reality of God's nature. Anger a finite apprehension respecting Him. The importance of discriminating the *genuine* from the *apparent* truths of Scripture, since all heresies quote Scripture for their support.

FROM what has been adduced in preceding chapters, it is evident that the Bible is the profoundest of all books, being produced by the wisest of all authors, with a view to promote the spiritual instruction of men as the best of all purposes. It is a composition for the edification of all men, at all times, in all states. As God's Revelation, not to any men in particular, but to all in general, it must be distinguished by a peculiar philosophy, in order that the simple may read it with simplicity, and derive edification; and the educated peruse it with learning, and extend their wisdom. It is the medium of all sound virtue and practical intelligence with men. The world, without the Bible, would have been very different from what it is. This is evident from the distinction observable among the people who have it, and those who have it not. In the former case, we notice men distinguished by moral elevation and mental dignity, in the latter, we behold humanity in degradation and repulsiveness. Who can doubt that the presence of the Word of God is the medium of those advantages, or deny that its absence is the cause of such unhappy results? We could have known nothing true concerning God, spirituality, or heaven, without Revelation; by this we have been rescued from the unsatisfying teachings of a heathenish philosophy, and favored with instructions by God himself. This will be generally admitted; it is a part of our common faith respecting this remarkable production. There are, however, some points connected with it which require great care and discrimination in order to their satisfactory reception by well-disciplined and thoughtful minds. What has been noticed respecting the spiritual character of Scripture writing belongs to the Bible as a general principle, but there are other Peculiarities associated with its literal sense, of the utmost importance to be attended to. That to which we are now about to direct attention is the *genuine* and *apparent* truths visible in the letter.

Although the Word, considered as a whole in reference to its moral drift and spiritual significance is, doubtless, such as we have stated it to be, it is well known that grave objections have been taken to certain portions of it. Thus, a few narrations can be cited, which do not appear to agree with the discoveries of science; some which do not seem to agree with the principles of morality and justice; and others which appear to contradict some of the

commands of the decalogue. For instance, the Scriptures speak of the sun rising and setting, which is not scientifically true. They say, "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones;" * this does not appear morally right; they also say "if any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," † which seems like a contradiction to the fourth commandment.

Now there is no inconsiderable amount of points possessing these features in the Bible. They who wish to be rational in their reception of that Book, as God's Revelation, will not close their eyes against them: they will carefully endeavor to understand the principles on which such statements have been constructed, so that the Word, which they are disposed to venerate in its general character, may not, by the presentation of particular difficulties, cause any abatement in their love of it.

As it has been said, God's Revelation, like every other work which He has brought into existence, possesses internal or spiritual evidences of its Divine authorship. The objects of the vegetable kingdom will bear to have their internal structure examined by the botanist, and those of the animal world by the anatomist, and the wonders discoverable in their internal arrangements infinitely surpass those which are observable in their outer structure. It is the same with the Holy Word. But as it requires a botanist to notice with accuracy the organization of a

* Psalm cxxxvii. 8, 9. By *daughter* here, is not meant a daughter, but affection. Affection is the characteristic of woman, and therefore, it is so represented in the Scriptures. Hence the true Church is called a bride and a wife; the false church is called a widow and a harlot. We read of the *Daughter* of Zion, and the *Daughter* of Jerusalem, where, by Zion, is denoted the Church as to good, and by Jerusalem, the Church as to truth, and by the *Daughters* thereof, are signified affections for those things. Now by Babylon is denoted a false and perverted condition of the Church, consequently by the *Daughters* of Babylon, are denoted affections for such perversity, and by her little ones are signified all the progeny of false principles which thence arise. This being the case, we at once see the happiness which must result from their destruction.

† Luke xiv. 26. Every one must see, that by the above relationships are not meant personal consanguinities, but spiritual principles with which the unregenerated are connected, which are evils and falses of various kinds. These are joined together like generations descending from parents, and are, as it were, distinguished into families and houses. The love of self, and the love of the world, are as a father and mother, and the lusts thence derived, with their evils and their falses, are the children who are as brothers and sisters. These loves are what constitute the life of the unregenerated. It is therefore easy to understand why men are taught to hate them; because to hate them means to put them away. That which a man loves is in him; that which he hates is out of him.

plant, and an anatomist to discriminate with certainty the uses proper to the viscera of the body, why should it not require a theologian to unfold the philosophy of Revelation? Every one who can read, may see an amount of light in the letter of the Scriptures, in like manner as all who have eyes may behold a star in the firmament; but how few are they who, seeing the star, know any thing of its actual character, its real dimensions, its distance from the sun, its position in the universe, or its uses in creation; yet something respecting all these things can be known; but then it requires a specific study to master the several sciences which conduce to supply the information. So it is with the letter of the Scriptures. Its visible truths are intellectual stars, but they have a nature and position, a magnitude and a moral, a spiritual significancy and an eternal purpose, which require devotedness of mind and character in order to furnish us with a knowledge of these things. The promise is "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (John vii. 17.) Superficial minds have complained, because they have not at once been able to discover, in a Divine passage of the Word, the whole intention of God; forgetting that the palace of true intellect cannot be entered without a certificate of the necessary qualifications. If seven years must be devoted to acquire the practical knowledge of a human handicraft, it is surely unreasonable to expect that a Divine work, in its minutest points, is to be comprehended by a single and untutored glance.

How exceedingly difficult it is to convey to a person who is born blind, an idea of colors. Our best efforts under such circumstances are only attended by imperfect success. When, then, we remember that all men are now born blind in reference to the facts of spiritual life, and the objects of the spiritual world; and consider that God in making his Revelation, has had to deal with us in this defective condition, surely we need not be surprised at the various seeming inconsistencies which are found therein. Reflection will show, that each is adapted to the state and degree in which our moral sight is opened by the right application of the "eyesalve." * The crude appearances, which are exhibited in its imperfect openings, are necessarily removed as the sight becomes more clear, and the light intense. Of the person whose eyes were opened by the Lord, it is said, when asked if he saw aught, that "he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking." (Mark viii. 24.) That, however, was an evident

* Rev. iii. 18. "Anoint thine eyes with eyesalve," signifies to heal the understanding that it may see and know truth, and thereby advance in wisdom, for unless this is the case, the genuine truths of the Word may be profaned.

mistake respecting the phenomena before him, arising from his yet defective vision: he learned the truth concerning it by a clearer development of his sight, which the subsequent verse describes to have been conferred upon him. So is it with the early openings of man's mental sight on the spiritual objects of Revelation. He at first sees those objects imperfectly, and concludes mistakenly concerning them. They who would acquire accurate knowledge of Divine things must permit the Lord to place his hands upon their eyes before they can "see every man clearly." That is, they must allow the Divine truth, some of which, as remains, is mercifully preserved to all men, to operate its vivifying purposes upon their moral character. Purity of life according to what we know, will open our eyes, and enable us to see more clearly and fully those things which as yet we do not know. The intellectual knowledges of Revelation cannot be usefully given to those who do not love the virtues which they teach. The man who turns away from the Bible because he thinks he has found a discrepancy, would do well to attend to the sentiments of his heart, these will sooner or later correct the mistakes and perversities of his head; for the Proverbs are "all the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understands, and right to them that find knowledge." (Proverbs viii. 8, 9.)

God, in his Revelation to men, not only expresses external ideas adapted to their states of natural thought, but he also teaches internal ideas, intended for a spiritual condition of discernment when they shall have attained to it. So long as men's ideas of God's Word are merely influenced by the objects of the outer world, they understand it in a natural sense only, and so far as this is the case, they comprehend not the things of God. But when their thoughts about the Word are admmissive of a holy dictate from the inner world, then they begin to think spiritually, and so far as this is done, so far the things of God are known. Thus, the Word of God opens out a more elevated signification to men, as they change from a natural mode of thinking, to a spiritual mode of conceiving its meaning; and therefore, the things of the Word which are seen in the former state, may be said to be the appearances of truth, and it is those conceived in the latter condition which are genuine.

It may be useful to illustrate this peculiarity by examples. Jesus said to his disciples "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God!" (Luke vi. 20.) From this, mere natural minds have imagined, that the felicities of the other life are chiefly for the poor, and they have confirmed themselves in this belief by another statement which declares, "that a rich man

shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. xix. 23.) Many, acting upon this idea, have gone into voluntary poverty, and some of the wealthy have been induced, in their dying hours, to give up their rich possessions to the church, in order that by departing poor, they might possess the qualification for heaven. But when the mind is raised above this natural idea, it is soon perceived to have been an interpretation founded on the mere appearances of truth, since it cannot be that reality of it, which God intended by those expressions. The riches of this world cannot exclude from heaven, nor can its poverty secure it. That result depends upon spiritual character, not on natural possessions or deprivations. This is evident from the whole scope of the Divine teachings. The poor then, to whom the blessing is promised, is that becoming humility of character, which, as a spiritual inheritance, is certain to exalt; and the riches which render entrance into the Divine kingdom difficult, are the *knowledge* of truth and duty, separate from the *life* of them. To *know* such things is to be *rich*, but we must *do* them to be *happy*.

So again Jesus said, "whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 33.) Here also, it appears as if the duty demanded was the relinquishment of all our possessions in the world. It has been so interpreted, but surely that cannot be the real truth; to act upon it universally would soon reduce the world to a state of want and wretchedness: this consequence shows, that the things to be forsaken are not our *bodily*, but our *mental* possessions—all those selfish and worldly loves, which are those things that are properly man's, and which, so long as he retains them, will certainly keep him away from the scholarship of Jesus.*

We are also told, that if the right eye offend us, we must

* Blaise Pascal, whose name is a proverb in the history of theological piety in France, from a misunderstanding of such passages as the above, imposed upon himself a series of remarkable mortifications. That he might forsake the world, he built a wall before his study to shut out the beautiful prospect of nature which lay before it; that he might devote himself to the Lord, he wore a girdle about his waist, studded with points, the lacerations of which were intended to prevent all personal enjoyment, and if by chance, or otherwise, he ate any thing that was grateful to his taste, he would instantly wound himself with the fork that he might overcome the pleasures of the world. Origen also, that very learned and distinguished father of the third century, from a literal understanding of the Lord's words, "There be eunuchs which have made themselves such for the kingdom of heaven's sake," Matt. xix. 12, made himself one for that purpose. Surely such acts must be regarded as fanatical errors. All ascetism, though among some it may indicate the presence of a strong principle of natural virtue, so far as it professes to derive a sanction for its existence from the Scriptures, mistakes the appearance of Divine teaching for its reality, and so perverts its purposes.

pluck it out, and if the right hand offend us, we must cut it off; and that to him who should be rude enough to strike us on the right cheek, we must turn the other also. (Matt. v. 29, 30, 39.) But every one sees, that the duties thus directed must refer to acts of the mind in respect to spiritual things, rather than to acts of the body in reference to natural things. The letter expresses only an apparent duty — the spirit makes known the reality. The eyes and hands are instruments of the mind, they therefore, can offend only as the mind directs them, consequently, to cut them off, would not remove the essential offender. By the eye and the hand, are represented the understanding and the will; the right eye is said to offend, when the understanding cherishes evil thoughts; and the right hand offends, when the will loves and pursues them; consequently, to pluck out the one and cut off the other, represents the duty of removing all evil, as an offending thing, from both these faculties of the mind.

Again, it is evident that no one is under any obligation from Christian love to turn the left cheek to those who may strike the right, in the ordinary sense of those expressions. Such a course would encourage misconduct rather than repress it, and represent Christianity as a thing to be insulted, rather than as a combination of dignified principles to be revered and loved. We must look beneath the appearance of the letter for the reality intended. The face is commonly regarded as an index of the mind, because in it are displayed the interior sensations of the man. How suddenly do certain moral sentiments and feelings declare their existence in the countenance of those who are frank and honest. There may be some which dissimulation can suppress, but there are others which break through the barriers of the most practised hypocrisy. The cheeks are representative of perceptions; hence modesty blushes on the perception of indelicacy and boldness, and guilt turns pale on learning that it is suspected or discovered. The right cheek is smitten when good perceptions are injured, and therefore it becomes our duty to turn the other also, because by the other, is represented the perception of truth; and to turn it, signifies to use it, for the sake of protection and security from further danger. It appears indeed, as if by turning the other were meant that it also was to be presented for the reception of injury; but it is not so said, nor can it be meant; for surely the Lord never intended to teach us, that when our good has sustained injury by temptation, or otherwise, that we should then voluntarily expose what we know of truth to a similar attack. He who has instructed us to pray that we may not be led into temptation, cannot have taught us to run into such a peril: therefore to turn the other cheek denotes to employ our perceptions of truth for the purpose of defence and

safety.* And the command, "I say unto you, that you resist not evil," is not to be understood according to the letter. (Matt. v. 39.) Doubtless the whole intention of the Scriptures, and the great object of the Christian scheme are to accomplish that very purpose which the sentence seemingly prohibits. If we did not watch over the impurities of our nature with a view to their resistance, it would be impossible to attain any of the Christian graces: the prophet says, "cease to do evil," (Isaiah i. 16,) and that cessation cannot be effected but by resistance. The Christian life is frequently described to us, as a spiritual warfare against all that would endanger the safety of intelligence and virtue; and the apostle, by way of encouragement, says, "resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James iv. 7.) It is plain then, that the Lord's command does not apply to the non-resistance of our own personal evils.

But does it refer to the evils of others? Are theft and murder, fraud and violence, treachery and oppression, with the other vices and immoralities visible in society, to exercise their detestable functions without a check? Are the laws of nations, which require the detection and punishment of the criminal — are the instincts of social morality, which demand that restraint should be put upon evil doers, — contrary to the true intent of the Christian maxim? Certainly not! Unless measures were taken for the repression of crime, virtue would have no security, property no protection, life no sacredness, talent no encouragement, religion no existence, but every thing estimable in the sight of our common Father would soon be brought into a frightful ruin. All this will probably be granted.

Still it may be said, that the design of this command was simply to teach us, that the disagreements which will occasionally arise in society, not from great crimes, but from moral offences, jealousies, misunderstandings, or prejudices, were to be left unheeded, since to make a stir about them is to fan the flame, and so enlarge the evil. But we cannot suppose even this mod-

* It is remarkable that the *right* side is that which is predicated as sustaining offence and injury in all the above cases. The reason is because those parts or organs which are situated on the right side of the body correspond to the good from which truth arises, and the parts or organs on the left correspond to the truth. Good is more powerful than truth, and man is stronger on the right side than on the left. Hence the correspondence, and consequent signification. It is because of this representation of the *right* and *left* that it is written of the Lord, that at the time of Judgment "He shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left," Mark xxv. 33. By the sheep on the *right* are denoted those who were in the *good of charity* and did it, and were consequently saved; while by the goats on the *left* are represented those who knew the *truths of faith* but did them not, and who were consequently lost.

ified view of the subject to be a correct one, because we do not think that it is any part of Christian duty tamely to submit to any misrepresentation, or to evince indifference to opinion or conduct that may be offensive or prejudicial to our welfare. On the contrary, we consider that we are called upon, by all just principles, to resist such evil doing, not simply for our own vindication, but for the benefit of evil doers; for surely it must be of advantage to such to let them know their errors, — to convince them of their faults. This is doing good in return for the evil sustained, and thus a display of charity; whereas to remain inactive and unconcerned, is to evince insensibility to wrong, and permit the perpetrator to enjoy his crimes; and so to die in his iniquity without remonstrance.

We must then search for another explanation of the above command. It is found in connection with the Jewish precept, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." (Matthew v. 38; Exodus xxi. 24.) This, with the Jewish people, was received as a law which permitted retaliation. It was delivered to them soon after their liberation from Egyptian bondage, and repeated on two other occasions. (See Lev. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 21.) But there is a peculiarity about this law which requires to be understood, before the maxim, "resist not evil," can be clearly interpreted. This law, we conceive, had its origin in some cause which is above all terrestrial considerations; it was intended to describe an important fact respecting spiritual life, rather than to sanction the retaliatory disposition of the Jewish people. It is a law declaratory of spiritual order; teaching us that they who do injury to others will as certainly experience a corresponding injury in themselves. They who, by any means, take from others the understanding of truth, or pervert the sense of it, must needs experience similar results in themselves. No one can perpetrate moral mischief upon others, and escape the moral consequence. "The offence and penalty go together, as substance and shadow, by the force of laws that cannot be broken." The evil which men do is precisely the evil which they have. This law is a statement of retribution, and it is to the evil doer of similar import to that, which of the good says, "all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. vii. 12.) Thus the law and the prophets teach, that whatsoever a man does, it shall be done to him. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted, and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." (Gen. iv. 7.)

The law then, which the natural disposition of the Jews led them to interpret as countenancing retaliation, is really a Revelation of recompense; and when the Lord, in reference to it, said

"resist not evil," he did not intend to repeal, but to explain it; resistance is not to be employed as resentment. Resentment is an evil quality; it is therefore the resistance of resentment which is forbidden; that does not regard the good of the evil doer, but looks to the gratification of a revengeful spirit, and he who indulges in this, is morally, as bad as the transgressor against whom it is directed.

From these illustrations we learn, that the genuine sense of the Scriptures is not always uppermost, even in those passages which seem to evince the greatest simplicity of structure. This might be further proven by other instances, but our object now, is not so much to dwell upon the fact, that some of the apparently most simple statements in the Word, express ideas somewhat different from the literal statement, as to show that there are some passages, the genuine meaning of which, is the very opposite of that which they seemingly express. This, at first sight, may appear strange, but upon examination it will be found true. The Lord has taught us to "judge not according to the appearance, but to judge righteous judgment;" (John vii. 24;) thus there are appearances, from which inaccurate conclusions might be formed, if we permitted our judgment to be guided by them; the righteous, *i. e.*, the right-wise judgment will conduce to a more intelligent result. It is said of the Lord by the Psalmist, "with the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with the upright man, thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure, thou wilt show thyself pure," and doubtless, all these showings of the Divine character are its realities, because they are presented to the judgment arising from the enlightened states of mercy, uprightness, and purity. These are the finite counterparts of the Supreme excellences, and thus constitute the ground of righteous judgment. But when it is further added concerning Him, "with the froward, thou wilt show thyself froward," (Psalm xviii. 25, 26,) it is plain that an appearance is declared, which can have no reality, since it is evident that God is not froward: though He will appear to be so to those who think of Him from a perverse and fretful spirit.*

On this it may be asked, why is it that God, in some portions of the letter of his Word, has spoken in language which conveys

* An able writer in the *British Quarterly Review*, for 1851, p. 194, says "It is admitted that the Divine communications made to Adam, to Abraham and others, are said to have been made by One, who condescends to be reasoned with by men; who changes his purpose in answer to prayers; is angry, and becomes placable through such influence; and who in short is subject to processes of thought and fluctuating passions, in common with ourselves. Now no intelligent man can doubt, that in all this, there is a wide divergence from the literal truth." They must then be descriptions of the Divine character, adapted to certain states of human apprehension.

apparent, rather than *genuine* truth? We answer, that the reason is grounded in the Divine desire to accommodate his instructions to the lowest orders of human apprehension. Sensual minds cannot but view spiritual things in a sensual way; but it is evident that such a view is not the true one: it belongs to the state of the man, and has no reality in the thing. Every one's experience tells him, that his ideas of moral and spiritual truths are modified by his own mental and moral state respecting them. Consequently, imperfect states originate defective ideas. So long, however, as such an imperfect state remains, so long will its defective ideas be cherished as realities, whereas the removal of that state and the attainment of a better, will demonstrate that they were nothing but appearances. As Dr. Watts observes, —

“ *All seems infected, that the infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.* ”

The eyes of a man in the jaundice, make yellow observations on every thing; and the soul tintured with any passion diffuses a false color over the appearances of things.”

If nothing but naked spiritual truths had been inserted in the Scriptures, then they would have been suited only to refined and spiritual states. Inferior minds would not find in such a composition any adaptability to their appreciation or wants; so that they who are in the “lower rooms” would not be brought within the hearing of the Divine invitation, “friend go up higher.” (Luke xiv. 10.) It therefore would not have consorted with the Divine mercy, nor have been consistent with the Divine purpose of making a Revelation suited to promote the edification of men in every state. Hence the Word is distinguished by the peculiarity of containing *apparent* truths adapted to the imperfect states of men; as well as *genuine* truths in agreement with the highest developments of spiritual and intellectual life. Moreover, the genuine sense of an apparent truth is frequently the reverse of it, because it is adapted to men who have reversed in themselves the order of their moral creation, and whom the Divine is solicitous to reach with instruction fitted to reclaim them.

But appearances of truth are not confined to God's work in the letter of the Scriptures; they are observable in a variety of natural phenomena, and thus there is some analogy between the two productions.

For instance, the sun appears to rise and set, but the truth is that it is a stationary body.

The moving stars appear like sparks of fire, but the reality is that they are ponderous worlds.

The fixed stars appear to be placed side by side in the same

plane in the firmament, but the truth is that there are some situated myriads of miles deeper in space than others.

The heavens appear to be a concave space, but there is no evidence showing this to be a reality.

The moon appears to be a flat circular body, somewhat about a foot in diameter, but the reality is that she is a globe two thousand miles across.

The earth which we inhabit appears to be an extended plane, but the truth is that it is an immense globe.

The objects which we see in water are not really in the precise places in which they appear.

The waves of the sea appear to be continually approaching the shore, even when they are in fact retiring.

To a person looking from under water in the sea, the sun appears to lie upon the surface, while the truth is that it is ninety-nine millions of miles distant.

In these interesting cases, the number of which could be easily increased, we find that the Peculiarity of Revelation adverted to, has a parallel in nature. But how has man been enabled to discover that these physical appearances are not realities? By the cultivation of his rational and scientific powers. The appearances presented to the senses have been scrutinized by the authority of intellect, and so it has been discovered that the *genuine* truth is very different from the *appearance*. From this, we think it may be fairly argued, that man can only acquire just ideas of certain appearances of truth in Revelation, as his powers of spiritual rationality and free research are developed. We find that there are cases in the world, in which the evidence of our senses is not to be trusted; and that their testimony has to be corrected by the discriminations of intellect; and we infer that there are certain statements in Revelation, in which the conclusions of the sensual mind are not to be depended on, and that its opinions have to be rectified by the superior penetration of man's higher and inner nature.

For example, to the sensual man it appears as if his natural life was his only life, and that sight was in the eye, hearing in the ear, speech in the tongue, and so forth; but the spiritual man knows that he has a living soul which executes those offices through the respective organs of the physical structure. Sensual men think that spirit is attenuated matter, and that God is altogether such a one as themselves, whereas the spiritual man knows that these conclusions are eminently untrue. The sentiments of sensual men on spiritual subjects, are mere appearances; and therefore the Scriptures, in adapting their teachings on those topics to sensual apprehension, must needs speak of them according to those appearances. This is done that man, in

the lowest depths of his degradation, may, as it were, be laid hold of by some accommodation of the Divine principle, and thereby be afterwards raised into the knowledge of realities. Every reflecting person knows that sounder views of truth are attained, as purer sentiments of reason are developed. The apostle said, "when I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." (1 Cor. xiii. 11.)

When then, we remember that the Word of God is the adaptation of Divine wisdom to all states of the human mind, we at once see that it must contain expressions which, to the inferior states of man, will indicate the appearances of truth only, and that as he rises into a superior condition through the influences of the Christian life, he will acquire a more intimate knowledge of its genuine character. The regeneration of man will raise him out of the mere appearances of truth, and give to him the discernment of what is real.* Still it is indispensably necessary, that the points of Revelation which are specifically accommodated to man's inferior state, should appear to him as true, so long as that state continues: if they did not so appear, they could not exercise any salutary influence upon his character and pursuits.

It is well known that there are many apparent incongruities in the letter of the Scriptures, but all these arise from their adaptation to the incongruous condition of fallen man. Every one is aware, that the state of man when Revelation first arrests his attention, is the very opposite of that which is developed by a practical obedience to its regenerating teachings. The Scriptures being designed to reach man in his state by nature, as well as to support him in his state by grace, we need not be surprised at the occurrence in them of some seeming contradictions. How many experiences have told us that we have beheld the same object under various aspects; and how frequently do we speak of seeing things in a different light? The child thinks his parent angry, when that parent suddenly rescues him from a danger he did not see; he supposes his father to be harsh, because that father enforces instruction, the value of which he does not know; but in after life, he is enabled to perceive that such rescue and such education were manifestations of the wisest love: from these facts we learn that the tenderest emotions and regards may sometimes appear as anger and

* "He that doeth the will of God, cometh to believe; — a process somehow or other, takes place in the understanding, which brings the mind of him who acts rightly, to this conclusion. A conviction is formed and every day made stronger and stronger. No man ever comprehended the value of christian precepts, but by conducting his life according to them." — Dr. Paley's Sermon, *How Virtue produces Belief, and Vice Unbelief.*

harshness. These moral phenomena introduce us to the secret, and teach us, experimentally, why it is that the Word contains *apparent* as well as *genuine* truths. We see that it has been written in accommodation to the various perceptions and changing conditions of man, in which all such varying statements have a response and counterpart.

Having indicated this general peculiarity of the Word, and stated some reasons for its existence, we will now pass on to the consideration of some of those remarkable examples, in which the character of the Supreme Being is variously described; others might be selected, but we have preferred these, because a just view respecting God, is of the utmost importance to the intellectual well being of man.

Now the Scriptures, in certain places, tell us that "God is love," (1 John iv. 8, 16,) and that "He is good to all;" (Psalm cxlv. 9;) but in certain other places he is represented as declaring that "the wicked, and him that loveth violence, His soul hateth," (Psalm xi. 5,) and that "He will love them no more." (Hosea ix. 15.) Again He said "I am the Lord, I change not," (Malachi iii. 6,) but it is also written that He "repented," (Genesis vi. 6,) and "many a time turned he his anger away:" (Psalm lxxviii. 38;) he also said, "fury is not in me," (Isaiah xxvii. 4,) yet it is declared "He is angry with the wicked every day." (Psalm vii. 11.) We read, also, that "God saw every thing that was made, and behold it was very good," (Gen. i. 31,) yet by the prophet he said, "I create darkness and evil." (Isa. xlv. 7.) He is represented to be "the Prince of peace," (Isa. ix. 6,) and in his manifestation in the person of Jesus Christ, to have proclaimed "peace on earth and good will to men;" (Luke ii. 14;) and yet he said "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword." (Matt. x. 34.)

Other instances of a similar character could be easily produced, but these are sufficient for our purpose. On the one hand, they declare that God is *love* and *goodness*, *munificent* and *changeless*, the maker of what is *good* and the author of *peace*; while upon the other, they represent him as *hating* and *implacable*, *angry* and *repenting*, the creator of *evil* and sender of *war*. These are indisputable statements, and at what conclusion must we arrive concerning them? Both classes cannot be genuinely true; and therefore, one class of passages must express only what is apparently true to men in some disorderly states; and the other, be descriptive of what is actually true as perceived by men in their renovated condition. This is in perfect harmony with the statement which assures us, that "to the pure, He shows himself pure, and to the froward, He shows himself froward." He appears to every man according to his state. They

who are wise and virtuous, regard God as love and goodness; these are his real and essential characteristics. They who are ignorant and selfish, consider that "He is altogether such a one as themselves." This however is but an appearance. The sun, when seen through a fog, appears to be red and lowering, but if at the same instant it is beheld from the mountain's top, it is seen in purity and whiteness. Those passages then, which speak of God as being angry and repenting, fierce and vindictive, executing vengeance and producing evil, are but the representations of the Sun of Righteousness, as he appears when seen through the fogs and mists of human error and transgression. To behold him in his actual character, we must ascend the mountain of his holiness, and so rise above the cloudy regions of our own errors. It is there that we shall find the greatest light, and consequently it is there that we shall possess the surest means for the clearest judgment.

The spirit and genius of the Bible, the conclusions of cultivated reason, the evidences of interrogated nature, and the purity of the Christian Religion, all concur in showing that the real character of God is essential love and wisdom, — that he is too good to be wrathful, too wise to do an act that should lead him to repentance, too just to be vindictive, and too holy to be angry. All these, and similar representations to be met with in the Bible, are not genuine truths, but mere indications of the mode in which He appears before perverted and degraded minds; hence it is that in every case where such representations occur, the subject which is treated of is the transgressing states of men.

Now a true religion can only be founded on correct ideas respecting God; a false idea, in proportion to its grossness, will always indicate a state of degradation among those by whom it is accepted. Disastrous consequences must flow into the church from the reception of erroneous opinions respecting Him, and therefore, it is of the greatest importance that men should discriminate between those realities and appearances of truth upon this subject with which the Scriptures abound.

From these considerations, it will be easy to understand why such different representations concerning God were permitted to have a place in his Word. But while the literal sense of one class of the above passages is not in conformity with the Divine character, the spiritual sense of them will be found in perfect harmony with it. And this also is an interesting peculiarity, deserving our attention. Let us then advert to some instances.

The statement that "the wicked, and him that loveth violence, His soul hateth," cannot be intended to express that God is influenced in his dealings with transgressors by the impulses of

hatred. This must be evident from the whole history of man. Notwithstanding his iniquity, God has followed him with the activities of his Providence to restrain his misdoings, and presented him the tenderest invitations to return to order and to happiness. Nothing is more evident in the whole purpose of Christianity than the Divine effort to reclaim humanity from its backslidings. It follows then, that the statements of God's hatred of the wicked, are to be understood simply as indications that his whole nature is contrary to their principles. Being in himself essential goodness and mercy, he cannot love any thing that is not in harmony with those attributes; but it does not follow that he hates what he cannot love. Men do not despise all that for which they have no affection. God's opposition to the wicked lies in the nature of his being, and not in the activity of any rancorous impulse. He regards transgressors with pity and compassion; and therefore, He is in the continual effort to save and bless them. This opposition is called hatred, from the aspect under which it is viewed by the criminal. They see the Divine character through a distorting medium, and so regard the oppositions of love as the detestations of hate. How evident then is it, that the genuine truth which lies beneath that appearance is, that God is love.

Again it is said that God *repented*, but this is only an appearance which takes place respecting Him, in those who are undergoing some favorable change in their own character; and therefore, it is a term announcing the development of his mercy. Repentance, in reference to man, is an act of obedience, and its design is to turn away some evil and promote some blessing. This is precisely what the Divine mercy is always attempting; and the good thus accomplished is spoken of as repentance in God, only because it effects a favorable change in the condition of man. The mutation transpiring in ourselves causes it to appear as if it were taking place in God, in like manner as the altering situations of the earth makes it appear as if vicissitudes were taking place in the position of the sun. The genuine truth is, that "God is not a man that he should repent."

It is written of the Lord, that "vengeance belongeth unto him," (Deut. xxxii. 35,) and that "He will take vengeance of his adversaries;" (Nabum i. 2;) but this cannot mean that God causes the infliction of pain for the offences committed against Him. He does not punish; that is the offspring of man's own wickedness. Vengeance is said to be God's, simply because he permits retribution to follow the violation of laws. They who love, live, and die in evil, are punished by the evil into which they have plunged themselves. It is the fruit of their own iniquity; and God is no more the author of their

sufferings, than He is the producer of the pain which results from thrusting a limb into the fire. In both cases, certain orderly laws of the Divine ordination are violated, and punishment is an *inherent* consequence of the guilt, not the *extraneous* inflictions of another. This is permitted by the Lord, and to the wicked it appears as if he were taking vengeance upon them as his enemies, whereas it is their enmity, and consequent opposition to good, which will not permit it to be otherwise; and therefore, the genuine truth involved in such representation is, that God is merciful; hence the psalmist said of God, "if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there." (Psalm cxxxix. 8.) Why is He there? Is it to inflict punishment? We cannot believe such a sentiment. Wheresoever God is, there is mercy; and the Divine Presence in hell must be for no other purpose than to mitigate the sufferings of that kingdom, so far as its wicked inhabitants will permit.

The passage which represents the Lord as saying, "I create darkness and evil,"* is written in conformity with the erroneous conception of those who love iniquity. So far as they are under the influence of evil principles, so far they will attribute their existence to God; but this is only an apparent truth to them; the reality is otherwise. No sensible and well-informed mind believes that ignorance and evil are of the Divine creation:

"Great God of heaven, it cannot be
That *false*, or *evil* flows from Thee;
Thou art eternally the same,
And love and mercy are thy name."

The term *create*, in the Scriptures, does not always simply mean to bring into existence. It is frequently employed in the sense of *regenerate*. The Psalmist says "*create* in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me;" "the people which shall be *created* shall praise the Lord;" "Thou

* Isaiah xlv. 7. In another passage it is said, "shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it," Amos iii. 6; which is commonly understood to mean, not that he brings moral evil, but that he is the avenger of it—that the punishment of a guilty people is from him! This, we think, the above argument must show to be erroneous. We have seen a sermon from these words, which had been delivered in a Jewish synagogue, in which it is asserted that the Hebrew might be translated "there shall be evil in the city and Jehovah hath not done it;" thus transposing the first two words, and making the first part of the passage prophetic instead of interrogatory, and the latter part of it, a disclaimer on the part of the Lord, of having had any thing to do with it. Without entering into this view of the original, we are of opinion that the marginal reading given by the English translators is the more correct and acceptable rendering, which is "shall there be evil in the city and shall not the Lord do somewhat," thus not making evil in any sense chargeable on God, but representing him as *doing somewhat*—somewhat for its removal.

sendest forth thy spirit and they are *created* ;” (Psalm li. 10 ; cii. 18 ; civ. 30 ;) in which passages it is evident that to create, denotes to regenerate. Now the work of regeneration involves two general circumstances, namely the removal of error with its associate evil, and the communication of truth with its partner goodness. As the former are removed, the latter are brought into activity ; so that to create darkness and evil, plainly signifies to regenerate those who are under the influence of those principles, by the effectual removal of them ; and this agrees with what is the genuine truth respecting the Divine character.

When the Lord said, “think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I came not to send peace but a sword,” it is evident that He could not mean to contradict what His whole Word shows to have been the chief design of his advent. The angelic proclamation concerning that event was “glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.” How then are we to understand his meaning ? The key to it is furnished by another passage, in which Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : *not as the world giveth give I unto you.*” (John xiv. 27.) Thus the peace which the Lord does not send on earth, is that peace which *worldly* and *earthly* minds desire — peace in the pursuits of selfishness. Christianity cannot secure tranquillity for such ; it was not sent into the world to subserve so low a purpose. They who love the world will always be subjected to anxiety and disturbance. The peace which Christianity promotes, can have no place with them ; “what concord has Christ with Belial ?” to them he sends *a sword* ; not the sword of the highwayman or the soldier, but “the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God ;” * by this they are required to correct their minds and elevate their characters, and so become receptive of that tranquillity which the Lord imparts. It therefore follows, that while the above passage, in the letter, appears to militate against the peaceful purpose of the Divine coming, the spirit, which contains the genuine truth upon the subject, is in beautiful consistency with the sayings of the heavenly host. These considerations show us very plainly, that the letter of the above passages expresses only appearances respecting the Divine character, as they arise in perverted minds, and that the genuine truth upon the subject is declared in their spiritual sense, that being adapted to the discernment of spiritually-minded men. To see these distinctions with certainty and clearness, is of the utmost importance to the intelligent well being of the church ; since it is evident

* Eph. vi. 17. It is because the sword is an emblem of Divine truth combating, that it is said, “out of His (the Lord’s) mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.” Rev. i. 16.

that they who form their ideas of God's character, from the literal sense of that class of passages from which the above have been selected, do not secure just views upon the subject. They mistake a distortion, occasioned by some defect of the moral vision, for a reality. It is commonly admitted that God is pure love and goodness; but still it is contended that he must be angry with fallen men, because their sins are so contrary to his nature. This may seem plausible, but it is not true. Although sin is contrary to God's nature, it does not follow that it induces him to be angry. Anger is as contrary to the Divine character as sin is, and therefore it is necessarily excluded from it. If God is induced to be angry when men transgress his law, he must be always angry, because men are continually guilty of this misconduct, and in that case how hopeless must be the condition of the world! God is opposed to sin, and condemns it; but this opposition and condemnation cannot be attended with anger. What would be thought of a judge, if when pronouncing sentence, he became angry with the culprit? Would he not be regarded as an unfit person for the administration of the law. Wisdom, mercy, gentleness of heart, and calmness of mind, are the qualifications requisite for such a functionary. Anger would disturb his judgment, and destroy his dignity; shall we then dare to ascribe that to *God*, when he condemns the sins of the world, which is seen to be unfitting of a *man*, when administering the laws of nations?

Look at the statement that "God becomes angry;" examine it with intelligence and candor; compare it with the declared facts of his unchangeableness and love, and the performance of this duty must result in the acknowledgment, that it is only descriptive of his appearance before perverted minds. It is written that "the pure in heart shall see God:" (Matt. v. 8:) this is the qualification requisite to judge of his reality. So far as men are without this fitness, their views and sentiments must be inaccurate; in such cases they regard Him under an aspect which does not really belong to him; He appears to them only through the mists and shades of their own mental darkness, and not in the light and loveliness of his own Being. How misshapen do distant things appear when they are beheld through fogs at twilight! Soon after the sun has set, trees may be seen like men or monsters, according to the imagination of him who sees them. "The thief fears each bush an officer."

If the Supreme Being has been angry at any time, he must have experienced an infirmity; anger is a weakness in man, how unwise then is it to attribute it to God; being a finite defect in us, it would be an infinite defect in him; that which is pitiable in man cannot be glorious in God. Nothing can have transpired in the world but what was foreseen by him, therefore human

transgression was not an unexpected occurrence ; on the contrary, God foreseeing its existence mercifully provided every means, which are consistent with the preservation of human freedom and responsibility, to lessen its enormity and induce men to return to the ways of propriety and holiness. How groundless then is the notion which asserts Him to have been angry. If God were once angry, he must always remain so, because he is unchangeable. If he is angry, he must be infinitely angry, because all in him is infinite. How then can we reconcile the ideas that he is infinitely angry and infinitely loving? Are they not obvious contradictions? And supposing them both to be realities in the Divine character, each would neutralize the activity of the other; for that which the Divine anger would condemn, the Divine love would rescue, and this represents the Supreme as struggling between the efforts of two opposite principles, which, because they are both infinite, must result in nothing!

The excellence and beauty of the human character consists in its resemblance to the Divine perfection. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect:" (Matt. v. 48 :) "be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke vi. 36.) Still, man's highest attainments in these imperishable virtues are but the shadow and image of the Divine purity. In him every excellence is infinite. Their sweetness and placidity are not to be disturbed — their immutability and spotlessness are not to be changed by human disobedience. God "knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust," (Psalms ciii. 14,) and with this knowledge and remembrance "his mercy endureth forever." The good man feels this mercy to be a reality; the bad man has not this experience, because he seeks gratification in disorderly pursuits; and every thing obstructive of such a course is regarded by him as an enemy and treated with disdain. The thief hates the law which restrains his dishonesty; the traitor detests the law which represses his treason; the libidinous have contempt for the laws which protect innocence and chastity; and so the wicked, in turning away from the influences of virtue, are enraged at all those acts of Providence which are designed to repress their excesses. The Divine Providence, as it is manifested in the teachings of the Word, in the institutions of morals in society, and the establishment of laws for the punishment of crime, is continually active to thwart and stay the pursuits of the wicked. They however, feel these restraints as the indications of displeasure, whereas it is evident that they are acts of genuine mercy. Hence such characters think God to be angry, even when He is in the very effort to put aside some evil which they love, and communicate some good; and so his real designs are the very reverse of what they appear to minds so circumstanced.

The whole Scriptures are constructed on the principle that God loved the world. All the displays of his Providence are to induce men to reciprocate that love, and to become both wise and happy. The wicked are made to feel the influences of this love in the restraints which it mercifully imposes upon the activity of their disorderly pursuits, and so the very goodness which God would promote in them, is felt in those restraints as indications of his anger, which, nevertheless, is a sentiment that cannot enter into the Divine character. The circumstance that His compassion is infinite must needs exclude such a sensation from his mind.* They are opposites, and therefore cannot exist together in the same all-perfect nature.

The Lord said "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." (Jer. xxxi. 3.) If this passage express a reality, how plain is it that those which ascribe anger to Him are written to agree with an appearance which arises respecting him in perverted minds. A wicked man has inverted in himself the order of the moral sentiments, and therefore he sees objects pertaining to spiritual life only in an inverted form. It is to correct this condition that the wicked are so frequently admonished to *turn* unto the Lord. It is evident then, that love, mercy, compassion, holiness, wisdom, and all perfection, are the *realities* of the Divine nature; while anger, wrath, indignation, and vengeance, are but *appearances*, still appearances which seem real, to all those who think of the Divine through a perverted character.

An enlightened survey of nature presents no intimation respecting anger in God; the reason is because there is no such principle in his Being. The universe furnishes no analogy suggestive of such a thought. The sun is acknowledged to be the purest emblem of the Deity; hence he is called "a Sun," (Psalm lxxxiv. 11,) and "the Sun of Righteousness." (Malachi iv. 2.) But there is nothing observable in that glorious luminary, which can be said to answer to the notion of any supposed anger in God. Lowering and darkness are not in him; these phenomena are occasioned by the interposition of clouds, and the diurnal motion of the earth; the sun forever shines in brightness and in beauty; he never frowns even upon the wicked; he shines alike upon the evil and upon the good. And so it is with the Divine character; the contrary is predicated of God only because he

* The apostle says "be ye angry and sin not," (Eph. iv. 26.) From this some may argue, that anger is not incompatible with purity of character; we, however, are not of that opinion. We agree with Dr. A. Clarke on this point, who says "we can never suppose that the apostle delivers this as a precept, if we take the words as they stand in our version. Perhaps the sense is *take heed that ye be not angry, lest ye sin*, for it would be very difficult even for an apostle himself to be angry and not sin." — *Commentary*.

appears to be so to those who have perverted in themselves those spiritual mediums for thinking of him justly.

True ideas of God's character and the dealings of his providence are obtained, only so far as he is contemplated through the unprejudiced mediums of intelligence and virtue: when viewed from these principles their reality and genuineness become conspicuous. It is then that men penetrate the letter of Revelation and behold the spirit of it. They see how it is that the same statements act differently upon different minds; why it is that the wicked are terrified at the idea of "God being a consuming fire;" (Deut. iv. 24; Heb. xii. 29;) and that the good are consoled by the very same expression. Each contemplates it under the influence of a different character; the former, because they are brought into sufferings as the consequences of their iniquity, regard them as the inflictions of God; the idea that he is a consuming fire, *i. e.*, that he is the promoter of punishment, is one of the falsehoods associated with their perverted condition. But the latter know that God is so called to indicate a very opposite sentiment. They remember that when fire is predicated of the Supreme, it is an emblem of his love,* and consequently, that this love is "consuming" only in the sense of removing the evils and repressing the errors of humanity. It is thus plain that the different aspects of the Divine love arise out of the different states from which men regard it. The good know that the Lord is continually renovating the interiors of the will and illuminating the interiors of the understanding; and the evil, because the Lord is in the continual effort to remove their evil, think the very reverse; they must needs do so because they are in an opposite principle. It is on this account that the Lord appeared as glory to Moses upon mount Sinai, while to the children of Israel, the sight of that same glory was as a devouring fire. (Exodus xxiv. 16 to 18.) The former circumstance represents the aspect under which the Lord is contemplated by internal men, and the latter describes the appearance under which he is thought of by those who are external and sensual.

It is said of the Lord that he is "a Jealous God;"† but this

* It is well known that *fire* was an object of worship among the ancient Persians; and there can be no doubt of its having originated out of the above idea. Bishop Huet conjectures that it was first employed as the "image" or "symbol" of the Divinity; and afterwards as the Divinity Himself. We think this a just view of the case.

† Exodus xx. 5. "This language is adapted to the passions and infirmities of human nature."—"By an allowable metaphor, God may be said to be jealous, when his intelligent creatures prostitute and abuse those intellectual faculties with which he has endowed them, by giving up their minds to the follies and absurdity of idolatry."—*Annotations on the Holy Scriptures*, by the Rev. John Hewlett, B. D.

is immediately followed by an intimation that there are two classes of persons to whom this declaration is addressed. One is those who hate the Lord, the other is, those who love him; the former is to be visited with iniquity, to the latter is to be shown mercy. It is evident therefore, that each must view this declaration under a different aspect. The jealousy of God, to those who hate Him, will appear as a punishing principle, while to those who love Him, it will be experienced as a principle which rewards. It is well known that all jealousy is from affection, but it may partake of a good or evil quality. There is the jealousy of love, and the jealousy of envy: in this latter, there are present fear, doubt, and suspicion, but none of these are predicable of God, and therefore, the term in such a sense merely expresses the fearful and apprehensive condition of those who perpetrate infidelity towards Him. They must needs think that God will so display himself to them, because it is known that they would so conduct themselves if they were in his place. But the jealousy of love is *zeal* for the preservation of fidelity; and consequently they who love the Lord see that he is jealous, simply in the sense of being *zealous* for the maintenance of faithfulness and purity.* Thus, that God is jealous, in the sense of being an avenger, is only an apparent truth to those who hate him; and that he is jealous in the sense of a preserver, is a genuine truth with those who love him.

God is not a Being to be dreaded. It is indeed said "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psalm cxi. 10.) Thus, it is the commencement of a process which may conduce to happiness; but when that end is procured, the sensation which was in the beginning, will have entirely disappeared. Men are taught to fear the Lord because such a state is, more or less, inseparable from an unconverted condition. That which is "first with them is not spiritual but natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual." (1 Cor. xv. 46.) They who cannot be guided by the impulses of love, have to be restrained by the sensations of fear. Fear however, is very different in its quality; with the natural man, it arises from an apprehension of danger on account of self; and although it may lead to obedience, it will be only the obedience of selfishness. Fear disjoins and separates from that which is the object of it. It does not live with the openness and generosity of religion; nor is it compatible with the purity of disinterested love. Hence the apostle says "there is no fear in

* The term jealousy comes into our language from the Latin *zelotypia*, and this was derived into that tongue from the Greek words *zeli typus*, which signifies type of zeal. The original Hebrew term, rendered in our version, jealous God, may, with equal propriety, be translated zealous God.

love; but perfect love casteth out fear." * That is, the selfish fear of the natural man is removed by this excellence of the spiritual man. This latter is not without the fear of God, but then it is a holy fear,—that of dishonoring him who is the object of his love. Thus, fear in the one case, arises from the supposition that God will punish; and in the other, it is grounded in a reverence for the Divine perfections. The quality of fear in each case is essentially different; in one the object of it is an apparent truth, while in the other it is a reality.

It is to furnish us with some idea of the purity of the Divine character that the Scriptures speak of him as a *Father*, who regards all his children with the tenderest affection—who has never separated any from his holy attentions—and who is ever ready and always willing, with open arms, to receive into his bosom the repentant and returning prodigal. They also speak of Him as a *King*, who has enacted the wisest laws for the government of the people, whom he has blessed with the ability to see their excellences and the liberty to obey them. They represent Him as a *Judge*, who administers the law with perfect equity and mercy, giving to all men according to their works. They describe Him as a *Prophet*, who has wisely foretold us of the loveliness of virtue and the deformity of vice; pointing out the happy results of the one, and the miserable consequences of the other. They reveal Him as a *Priest*, influenced by the dictates of the purest truth, and fervently pointing out to men the way to heaven. They declare Him to be the *Redeemer*, who has rescued man from the bondage of spiritual obsession, into which successive and accumulated guilt had plunged him. They pronounce Him to be the *Savior*, not from the indignation of the Divine wrath, but from our own personal sins. All the positions of greatness and authority, which would lose their dignity by the ebullition of anger, are employed in the Scriptures to convey to man an idea of the real perfections of God, and to convince him that His love is unalterable and everlasting.

Now if God is pure love in its broad unqualified meaning—if he has never had his tranquillity disturbed by the outbreaks of anger—if such a sensation is wholly foreign to his nature—if it is wrong to think him such a one as ourselves, and that such descriptions are but appearances respecting him, raised up by the perverted states of erring and sinful men, then what becomes of the popular doctrine of the atonement? The supposed anger

* 1 John iv. 18. "The love of God—were it carried up as high as in a perfectly virtuous and rational soul it might be carried would, I believe, absorb every other motive, and every other principle of action whatever, even the fear of God among the rest."—Dr. Paley's *Sermon on the Love of God*.

of God is the point from whence it takes its rise. It underlies the whole system. The theory rests upon it as a house upon its foundation. If then this groundwork of that doctrine is removed; if the first principles of it are dissipated; if the supposed anger of God has no basis in fact, then there is some reason to conclude, that the system of redemption which has been built upon that idea, cannot be recognized as genuinely true. That God, by the assumption of humanity in the world, did accomplish the works of redemption and atonement for man,* and that the nature of them is fully disclosed in the Scriptures, are facts of unquestionable certainty; but that view of those works which sets out from the idea that God the Father became angry at the transgression of man, and that his indignation was so fearfully aroused that it would admit of pacification only by the suffering and death of His only Son, is, we humbly think, an error and mistake, springing out of those statements of the Word, which

* By redemption, we understand the deliverance of man from the preponderation of evil influences, which acted upon him at the period when the Lord God of Israel visited to redeem his people, Luke i. 68; thus that God, by means of an assumed humanity, removed from men the evil that was about to overwhelm them from the infernal world. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil." 1 John iii. 8. "The Son of God was the humanity assumed." The angelic annunciation was, "that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35. This being done, the reconciliation of man to God was effected: for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." 2 Cor. v. 19. This reconciliation is what constitutes the atonement; for the only instance in which that word occurs in the New Testament, distinctly says, "we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." Rom. v. 11. Hence we learn, that it is we who have received the atonement, and not God, as it is popularly taught!! Besides, atonement denotes reconciliation; the same original word is so translated, and that that is its proper signification, every scholar may satisfy himself if he will consult the Greek version of the Scriptures; the Syriac version made so early as the second century; the Latin vulgate; and the old English editions of Tyndale and Coverdale. There are three terms in the Greek version which signify reconciliation. 1 *Diallasso*, 2 *Katallasso*, and 3 *Apokatallasso*: it is from the second of these, *Katallasso*, that the substantive *Katallagē* is derived, and which is translated atonement, in the passage above cited. The Syriac and Latin versions of the New Testament have, in all the places where these Greek words occur, translated them by a word which signifies to *reconcile*, or *reconciliation*. So, also, do some of the English versions of Tyndale and Coverdale. Classic authors and lexicographers employ the words in the same sense, so that there is not the slightest ground for doubting that reconciliation is the proper idea expressed by the word rendered *atonement*. Reconciliation is that condition of feeling in which the parties concerned are brought into a state of at-one-ment. Thus the Lord, by his redemption, brought man into a state in which he could be reconciled to the Divine requirements, and so receive the atonement. The popular doctrine, however, is, that "Christ truly suffered to reconcile his Father to us." Article of Religion ii. We cannot find any thing respecting this reconciliation in the Scriptures!

have been written in conformity with those appearances, which are produced by the perverted apprehension of sinful men.

Nature is a living and imperishable proclamation of the Divine love; *Providence* is a continual display of its munificence and care; and *Revelation* assures us, in most unqualified sentences, that God is love, and that he loveth us with an everlasting love. The *Redemption* which he has accomplished for us, and the means of *Salvation* which he has provided for our acceptance, are confirmations of the same encouraging and elevating truths. How unfounded then, upon any fact, must be that doctrine which takes its rise from the imagination of God's anger! The Divine love is in perpetual activity to bless the human race; it is universal, and the inmost principle of all order and happiness; nor can its intensity be diminished by any thing that man can do. If he acts contrary to its designs and desires, he thereby separates himself from its blessings, but the love itself remains with all its magnanimity. It is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

Such being the unquestionable reality of the Divine character, the duty of distinguishing between those descriptions of it in the Word, which express the genuine truth, and those which only indicate the appearance of it, becomes of the utmost importance. It is certain from the evidence and arguments adduced, that such different descriptions constitute a Peculiarity of the Bible, and a careful examination of the confusion which exists, and the contradictions discoverable, in the theological sentiments of our times, are chiefly attributable to a neglect of this duty, or to the want of information respecting it.

Every heresy has had Scripture quoted for its support; and the espousers of them all will continue to do so, with some seeming success, so long as the distinction of the genuine and apparent truths of Revelation remain unattended to. This therefore, is a subject demanding the serious consideration of all who are solicitous to avoid a foundation of sand, and to build their house upon a rock.

CHAPTER VII.

GOD'S MANIFESTATIONS TO MEN, CONSIDERED AS EVIDENCE THAT HE IS A DIVINE PERSON.

ARGUMENT. — We must go to the Bible to learn how to think of God. Philosophy without Revelation, has no materials from which we can know any thing of his person. The Divine will and attributes must have a personality in which to dwell. Man thinks finitely of God. Much that is said of the Divine appearances founded on man's imperfect apprehensions.

Instances of God's appearing in clouds, smoke, and fire, with some general explanations. No definite idea of the Divine Person deducible from such narratives. Clearer views related in the Scriptures. Cases in which God was heard, do not necessarily imply that he was seen. Several instances cited in which God is said to have been seen. An inquiry raised from those appearances. God, considered in Himself, cannot be seen. How such appearances are to be understood. Argument for the Personality of God afforded by his attributes of love and wisdom. Variations in the details attending the Divine appearances. The design of this. Scripture evidences explained. The phrase "Angel of the Lord;" what it is intended to express, with illustrative citations. Philosophy teaches that man cannot think of the Divine otherwise than as human. The opinions of the ancient Jews and Gentiles respecting God. The source whence each drew their ideas. The preservation of a similar idea in the Christian Church, and among the heathens who are out of it. The testimony of the Scriptures respecting the idea of God as a Divine Person. The "orthodox" opinions respecting the Being who assumed humanity, not founded on the express testimony of Scripture. The Son of God, God's manifested Person. How the statements of seeing and speaking to God face to face are to be reconciled with the declaration "no man hath seen God at any time," &c. The Scripture Revelations show that God is to be thought of as God-Man. We must think of God with some actual idea to love him and have faith in him. That idea must have respect to him as a Divine person. Objections to this view arising from the representative character of the literal sense of the Scriptures, considered. The idea of the Divine Human not to be entertained in any gross sense. A summary of the argument. A defined view of God's Personality does not take away from his mystery and majesty. True idea of God's person not to be confounded with the anthropomorphism of the fourth and fifth centuries. How that doctrine was understood, and how the true doctrine is distinguished from it. To have an enlightened view of the Personality of God he must be thought of from essence to person, and not from person to essence. Illustrations of this. Man cannot form abstract notions, he must give them embodiment. Hence it is permitted that man should so think of God. The correctness of this idea sanctioned by God having become manifest in the flesh. Express testimonies from the apostles respecting it. The manhood of God not creaturely but creative. That it was Jehovah Himself who assumed humanity. The supposed difficulties of the incarnation combated. The maternal to be distinguished from the paternal humanity of the Lord. Evidences of the Divine character of the latter by His Transfiguration and Resurrection. The Lord's appearance to Mary Magdalen, Thomas, and the other disciples, considered. The assumption of Divine humanity, a Revelation of the Divine Person, more in the ultimates of manhood than the angels. Jesus Christ the name of Jehovah in His humanity, and thus the only God.

THAT Peculiarity of the Bible which is now to engage our attention, lies in those narratives which speak of God's manifestations to men. The Christian goes to the Scriptures for his idea of God; he knows that without Revelation, his understanding would have been a blank upon this subject; he therefore, with a full heart and earnest mind, consults the Word for the purpose of learning how to think of Him. He feels that the first article of true religion ought to be constructed on a clear idea of God, and he believes that the chief object of the Scriptures is to communicate this idea to the world. A mistake upon

this matter is dangerous to the consistency of faith, and injurious to the purity of morals. The branches cannot rightly flourish unless they are truly grafted in the vine. If in the consideration of this subject, we pass by the teachings of Revelation, all is darkness. We are then perplexed with the impressions made by time and space, and attain to nothing. Philosophy, unaided by the Scriptures, is without materials for conducting such an inquiry. We cannot think of the beginning of time, or the termination of space, without being assailed by the inquiries, what was before the former? and what is beyond the latter? All our investigations of nature, in order to furnish us with information respecting the Divine, will ever be attended by these interrogatories. Men cannot idealize the vastness of creation; they say it is boundless, but that is a word to which no relative idea can be attached: whatsoever from without, enters into the mind, and there becomes an idea, has its limits. The definite of mind cannot grasp the indefinite of matter! What then can be said of man procuring an idea of God who is infinite? It is evident that time and space do not furnish it. On these data numerous minds have engaged in the inquiry without any satisfactory results; and, on such grounds it must ever be so; therefore, that we might know Him, God has condescended to make a Revelation on the subject for our special edification.

The Bible is the exclusive source from which correct knowledge of God is to be obtained. It communicates, not merely Revelations of His will, and declarations of His attributes and character, but some remarkable information respecting his Personal Being. Will, and the attributes ascribed to God by general consent, must have a personality in which to dwell. He cannot be thought of apart from this idea: and, as Revelation informs us that man was created in the image of God, there is ground for concluding this idea to be true. The whole Scriptures respond to this human conception of the Divine. They treat of Him as a Person, in some exalted sense, and as such he is spoken of throughout all Christendom. This term, though commonly used in reference to God, is not always employed with a definite meaning. *Orthodoxy* intends by it to express the conscious existence and rational nature of the Divine Being, but it hesitates to acknowledge that this consciousness and nature are possessed of any absolute personal form. It confesses existence, but denies to it embodiment; we, however, do not see how a rational essence can exist without a personal form. To us, that appears to be the logical sequence of the premises. And this is the idea which we are desirous of conveying by that expression; it seems to rise up spontaneously with all our thoughts respecting him, and the moment we cease so to think of him, he

vanishes and becomes as nothing. We, of course, regard him as Absolute Mind, possessing within himself the assemblage of all that is perfect in love and transcendent in wisdom, and in whom all things are infinite; still these things must have a subject in which to exist, and this subject, we conceive, must be the human form in infinite perfection. It may indeed be asked whether this idea is genuinely true of God, or whether it is only such as man is capable of procuring. On the authority of Revelation, we believe it to be the true one, and philosophy assures us that no other is consistent with his attributes. God exists, and his existence with men is not separable from this idea. All the laws of human thought force this upon us as a just conclusion. Is it, therefore, not just? * Would God have ordained those laws of thought, and delivered to us a Revelation in which its conclusions are corroborated, if it were not the idea which he is solicitous we should cherish respecting him? We say the idea which he is solicitous we should cherish respecting him, because this is the fact which really concerns us. Considered as to his eternity and infinity, He is beyond the highest capabilities of analytic thought. We must ever think temporally and finitely; nor can we get rid of this condition of our intellectual exertions. There is no reason to suppose it was ever intended we should do so. We can reasonably acknowledge that God is infinite and eternal, and see that it is unreasonable to attempt thus to comprehend him; therefore, that which really concerns us in any inquiry of this kind, is that idea of the Divine Personality, which the Scriptures have announced for our acceptance, and which, consequently, the human mind can satisfactorily recognize. Let us then examine their evidence upon this subject.

It is obvious that very much that is said of God's appearances in the Scriptures, is principally founded upon our imperfect

* Objections have been urged against this argument by modern infidels, who have said that it has no force, because if the beasts could think of God, they would think him like themselves! Now this is a very old pretence. It was first urged by Xenophanes against those who had contended that God must exist in a human form; and afterwards by Cicero, in his *De Natura Deorum*, lib. 1. chap. 27, in which he makes Cotta say "you advance forsooth, the argument that to man nothing seems more beautiful than man. Do you imagine that there is any beast of the earth or sea that is not enamoured of creatures of its own kind? Do you suppose that an Eagle, or a Lion, or a Dolphin, prefers any shape and form to its own? What wonder then, inasmuch as nature has taught man to imagine nothing more beautiful than man, that this should be made by us a reason for thinking the gods like ourselves. What think you, if there were reason in beasts, would not each claim the highest honor for its own shape." Now it so happens that the beasts have not reason — that they cannot form such an idea, and therefore, an objection, taken from the supposition of something that does not exist, to oppose an argument based upon a fact that does exist, needs no reasoning to show its absurdity and pointlessness.

apprehension of Him. From these we select the following instances.

During the journeyings of the sons of Israel in the wilderness, it is written that "the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light." (Exodus xiii. 21.) Likewise "the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak unto thee. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace." (Exodus xix. 9, 18.)

These cases of the Divine appearance are such as could not have impressed the beholders, with any very definite idea respecting God. The people might have gathered some notions of His majesty, and have been awed by the sight of such miraculous phenomena, but they could not gain from them any precise idea concerning his Person. The Psalmist, referring to this narrative, says that the Lord "spread a cloud for a covering; and a fire to give light in the night." (Psalm cv. 39.) The Israelites then saw the covering and the fire, but not the Lord. He was not the fire nor the cloud. They "heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude." (Deut. iv. 12.) It is evident then, that those appearances of the Divine were only such exhibitions respecting Him, as were in agreement with the states of the people. The wise perceive spiritual truth in light, the ignorant see it only in obscurity. They who have imperfect eyes will necessarily experience defective vision. The people of Israel, at this period, were just liberated from a long Egyptian bondage, and it is very plain that they were exceedingly defective, not only in religious knowledge, but in religious character. When therefore, they were first called upon to enter upon a religious career, (for that unquestionably was the purpose for which they had been delivered from slavery, sustained by Providence, and introduced into Canaan,) their brightest conceptions of the Divine Being were exceedingly obscure, and hence he is described to have appeared "by day in a pillar of a cloud." * Day denotes a condition of mental lucidity arising from thoughtful-

* It is instructive to remark, that the Lord's appearance is frequently mentioned in connection with a cloud. Thus, "behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud," Isa. xix. 1. "Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud," Lam. iii. 44. "His strength is in the clouds," Psalm lxviii. 34. He "maketh the clouds his chariot," Psalm civ. 3. The Lord's transfiguration was attended by a cloud, Luke ix. 34, and His second coming is to be in a cloud, Matt. xxiv. 30. The reason why clouds are thus associated with the Lord's appearance is, because they represent man's obscurity of thought respecting him; and thus the letter of the Word, which has been constructed in reference to that condition.

ness; and a cloud signifies what is respectively obscure therein. But in the night, the appearance was "in a pillar of fire;" because that which, in our brightest states of mind, seems to be obscure and cloudy becomes, in our darker hours, a source of light. Religious thoughts, which seem cloudy before the eye of intelligence, are seen as somewhat lucid by a mind which is less informed. The smoke which arises from an open fire appears, by day, as dense and cloudy, but the very same smoke looks light and fiery by night. The truth which seems obscure in our superior states, appears as light to those that are inferior; and so long as man is passing through a moral wilderness to secure a spiritual Canaan, so long the Divine will appear as a cloud in the day, and as a fire in the night for light. The cloud is called "a pillar," in reference to the ascending character of thought. When man thinks of God from a condition of sensual light, that thought is a pillar of a cloud; when he thinks of him from a state of sensual love, that thought becomes a pillar of fire. Hence those appearances of the Divine to the Israelites, were in agreement with their states of thought respecting him, and indeed a representation of them.

So also, the appearance described to have taken place in a thick cloud, fire, and smoke upon mount Sinai, was in agreement with that apprehension of Him which arose from the states and character of the people. They, as before remarked, were exceedingly low, both as to intellect and morals; hence they displayed but little gratitude for their deliverance and protection; exhibited murmuring and dissatisfaction with Moses, and longed after the flesh pots of Egypt. (Exodus xvi. 2, 3.) Their ignorance of God is very conspicuous; they would not otherwise have made a golden calf to worship, and proclaimed it to be the God of Israel. (Exodus xxxii. 4.) How plain then is it, that God's appearance as a thick cloud, to a people so circumstanced was, at once, the result and the representation of their ignorance respecting Him; and also that the fire and the smoke as of a furnace, were aspects of the Divine which arose out of their evil loves, and the false sentiments which issue therefrom. It is easy to see that a thick cloud denotes dense ignorance, and that fire, with such a people, is a figure of their burning lusts, consequently the smoke was a representation of the falsehood which those lusts beget. That this is a just view of these appearances, is plain from other statements referring to a similar event. The same chapter which tells us, that "the sight of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel," also informs us, that "Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel saw the God of Israel, and as it

were the body of heaven in his clearness." (Exodus xxiv. 9, 10, 17.) To one class of persons, He appears in purity and brightness, to another, in clouds and fire, a distinction which is obviously to be referred to the different states of the people. And these facts reveal to us, that when the Church in general, or its members in particular, pass into similar states, their intellectual apprehension of God will be in correspondence with those written representations. This is one of the lessons which these manifestations were designed to teach. Men do not now see the Lord under an outward visible aspect, as was the case occasionally with the Patriarchs and others; not that the arm of the Lord is shortened, but that he has removed the ground for its necessity by providing his Word. The way in which God is to be seen in the Christian Church, is intellectually, — by the sight of the understanding enlightened by Revelation; which is commonly called "the eye of faith." But while the Lord appeared as a *devouring* fire to those who were unfavorably circumstanced for beholding him in his genial aspect; it is also to be observed, that fire and light have attended his manifestation to those who have been in superior states; but in these cases they were not seen as *devouring*, but as warming and illuminating phenomena; the difference in the aspect arising from a difference in the state of the beholder; the following are examples illustrative of this latter view.

To Moses, He "appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush." (Exodus iii. 2.) To Ezekiel, His manifestation was attended by "the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about." (Ezekiel i. 27.) Daniel beheld "the Ancient of days, and His throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire," (Daniel vii. 9, 10,) and His manifestation to John was with "eyes as a flame of fire, and a countenance as the sun, shining in the greatness of his strength." (Rev. i. 14–16.) Now why were these the accompaniments of the Divine appearance? God does not act without a purpose; and therefore, He must have designed by these phenomena to indicate some idea to the minds of the beholders; and can we fail to perceive (as the subjects treated of in those cases were connected with the orderly states of men,) that they were representatives of his truth and love? To all who are in the understanding of His Word, He appears in the flame of light and in the fire of love; but the brilliancy of the light and the intensity of the love will ever be proportioned to such an understanding. Fire is the emblem of love, and the light of such fire is the symbol of truth. Of this most persons are aware. The prayer which asks for heavenly fire to animate our hearts is constructed on this idea; and the fire which descends from heaven is nothing else than the influent

love of its inhabitants operating upon the world to bless humanity. Love, in reality, is a vital fire, filling the interiors of man with actual heat. Hence it is, that men grow warm according to the intensity of their love, and become cold as their love diminishes. This then, is the reason why fire is significant of love; and as light proceeds from a flame of fire, so truth comes forth from purity of love; hence we speak of truth as light. Truth enables the mental eye to perceive intellectual things, in like manner as light enables the natural eye to behold physical objects. These considerations show us the reason why the Lord is so frequently described to have appeared in fire and flame. They were intended as Revelations of His love and wisdom to the world.

Although it is plain that the foregoing narrations of the Divine appearance were Revelations of the Divine attributes, beheld under different aspects, in consequence of the different states of the percipients, yet no very definite idea of the Divine Person is to be gathered from them. Still there are very many other statements in the Scriptures, from which some information upon this point may be obtained. To some of these we will now direct our attention.

The numerous instances in which we read of God having spoken to Adam, Noah, the Patriarchs and others, do not necessarily imply that he was seen upon those occasions. The Divine communications might have been distinctly heard,* and yet He who made them might not have been clearly seen. A case with Samuel shows this. In those days there was no open vision, the Lord called to Samuel but he saw Him not. (1 Samuel iii. 1-8.) Nevertheless, it is eminently reasonable to infer, that the Being who so spoke to them was distinguished by Personality. We do not see how the parties favored by such communications could have had any other conception respecting Him. They would conclude, as we must, that the Being who vouchsafed a dictate respecting moral and religious duties, was the Divine impersonated. They could not have conceived such a result from any other source, nor would the circumstance that He was not seen, at all have weakened this conclusion.

The Old Testament, however, mentions several instances in which He is declared to have appeared to certain individuals.

* It may here be proper to observe, that "the truth which immediately proceeds from the Divine cannot be heard by any one, not even by the angels. The Divine truth, in order to be heard, must first become human, and it becomes human when it passes through the heavens, where it enters into angelic spirits, by whom it is uttered." A. C. 6982. And this agrees with the Lord's own teachings where he says "ye have not heard His (God's) voice at any time," John v. 37. Man's hearing of those utterances is not the outward hearing of oral sounds, but the inward dictates of heavenly truth.

"When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him I am God Shaddai." *

"Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines, unto Gerar, and the Lord appeared unto him." (Gen. xxvi. 1, 2.)

"Jacob dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven;—and behold the Lord stood above it." (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.)

"Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel saw the God of Israel." (Ex. xxiv. 9, 10.)

Isaiah says, "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." (Isaiah vi. 1.)

Here we have five distinct statements of the Lord's appearance, and although there are certain particulars in all these narratives, which show that they were in some measure adaptations to the spiritual states of the beholders, yet it is plain, that the general design of each of them is to present to the human mind some defined idea respecting Him. What is that idea? Can any one doubt that it was such as pertains to a Divine Person, and thus that it was the prototype of human creation? Surely, if the object had possessed any other appearance, we should have been informed; we should, not have been left to draw so natural an inference, if it were not just. But how did they see Him? Doubtless it was not with their natural eyes, but by a kind of sight opened in them specifically for the purpose. Spiritual existences cannot be any otherwise perceptible to man; and they must have known that it was the Lord by a dictation of that idea from Himself.

And what did they see? Was it really the Supreme Being? The statements at first sight would seem to indicate that it was so; for in the more remarkable instance, it is expressly said that the parties "saw the God of Israel." Nevertheless it is obvious, that these statements must be received in a qualified sense. Although the phrase "God of Israel" † expresses the idea of

* Genesis xvii. 1. In our translation of the Scriptures, what is above called "God Shaddai" is rendered "Almighty God." The original is *El Shaddai*, and although these terms express the idea of a mighty or All-sufficient God, the name Shaddai was that under which Abram had acknowledged God, until he made known to him his peculiar name Jehovah, and therefore, that term ought to be retained.—*Universal History*, vol. xviii. p. 7, note 8.

† The phrases God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob frequently occur in the Scriptures; and by them, in an historical scene, we are to understand God as he had been seen by those Patriarchs, and believed in by them. It was the same God in all cases, though each person saw him with some distinction. This partly arose from their different states, and partly from the distinct ideas which each manifestation was intended to convey. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, viewed in an internal sense, denote the Supreme Being in reference to the three principles which constitute his nature, namely Love, Wisdom and Power.

God as seen by very interior vision, still it must be confessed that what was seen under that designation, because adapted to the sight of the finite spirit, must have been some suitable medium for His manifestation. God, considered in Himself, cannot be seen by any opening of the interior sight of men, and therefore, the appearances which are so described, were such impersonations as the Divine has deemed requisite for revealing himself to men, and they were intended to furnish us with an approximation to that just idea respecting Him, which He is desirous we should possess; since it was the Divine infinite adapting itself to the orderly apprehension of the spiritual finite.

The essential nature of God is love and wisdom, and man is the ultimate form in which they are displayed. The human race were created to receive these principles from Him; by means of them they are His image and likeness: they are also the instruments by which He perpetuates His moral and intellectual presence in the physical universe. Love and wisdom, properly such, never have been seen in any other than a personal embodiment; and it is eminently reasonable to conclude, as those principles exist infinitely and eternally in God, that any manifestation of them to finite minds must be by means of giving them personality. And while experience assures us that we cannot have any other idea respecting the Supreme Being, the Revelations, afforded under the appearances under which he has been seen, indicate that it is the just one. Without such an idea we should think indeterminately, and an indeterminate idea is no idea. To think of God from the visible universe is merely to think of Nature, and this has not unfrequently ended in mistaking Nature for God. To think of Him from what Revelation has taught concerning the human spirit, is the only intelligible method of contemplating so profound an object, and they who so think will necessarily have presented to them the idea of the Supreme under a human appearance. This is the aspect under which the highest intelligence must always view Him. It cannot be doubted that Adam and his immediate posterity so thought of Him. It is as such that he is described to have spoken and acted in His intercourse with them. Nor can any enlightened imagination suggest the possibility of his disclosing Himself to men in any other way. Hence this fact is conspicuous in all the circumstances which have been cited.

It is true, as before observed, that there are some variations in the details of these several visions; but they arose partly out of the mental quality of the percipients, and partly out of the particular truths which the Revelations were intended to disclose. This view is strikingly confirmed by other narratives. "It came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes

and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, what saith my Lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy." (Joshua v. 13-15.) It is agreed upon all hands, that the *man* thus described was seen in vision. That it was the appearance of the Lord seems evident, from Joshua having fallen on his face to worship before Him. He was not rebuked for so doing, which, judging from a case mentioned in the Revelations, he would have been, if the Being before whom he fell to worship had been a creature. (Rev. xxii. 8, 9.) The circumstance, however, of his being called Jehovah, in the second verse of the following chapter, demonstrates the fact. Here then we have a narrative expressly informing us, that the Supreme Being was seen by Joshua under the appearance of a glorious man, and yet there were other circumstances connected with this vision which indicate that *they* were specific accommodations to the mind of the beholder. The general appearance of the Divine was human, but because the party who saw the phenomenon was a soldier desiring the overthrow of the enemies of Israel, the particular aspect of that human was, as the captain of the Lord's host.

Ezekiel also, in describing his vision of heavenly glory, says that he saw therein "the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it," and then, after giving some other details respecting the aspect of this glorious person, he says, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." (Ezekiel i. 26-28.)

Daniel likewise, saw the Lord in vision, and says concerning Him, "I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphas: his body also was like the beryl, and his face was as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and feet like in color to polished brass; and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." (Dan. x. 5, 6.) That this is a description of the Divine appearance is evident, from Rev. i. 13-15, where the Lord, as the Son of man, is similarly spoken of.

In both of these descriptions, the Lord is distinctly recognized as a Divine person; indeed, he is plainly called a man; and this, for reasons already assigned, is the leading feature of all the Scripture revealments respecting Him. The particular aspect,

or distinctive glory under which he was seen, was presented because there was a difference in the mental condition of the beholder; and also because distinct ideas were intended to be announced by them. As in the case of Joshua, who was a soldier desiring the safety of Israel, He appeared as a captain with a sword; so to Ezekiel, who was a priest (Ezekiel i. 3) hoping for the restoration of the *monarchy*, that the functions of his order might be resumed, the Lord appeared as *King*, in the occupation of a *magnificent throne*. And to Daniel, who was a descendant of the kings of Judah, (Daniel i. 3,) looking forward to the rebuilding of the *Temple* which had been burned, and the reorganization of the *Priesthood* which had been dispersed, he appeared in the *habit* of a *Priest*. (Compare the narrative with Exodus xxviii. 4-39; xxix. 5.) The spiritual lessons which these respective appearances were intended to teach are, that truth and goodness, in their light and loveliness, will again be recognized among mankind; truth is as a king; goodness is as a priest. But our purpose does not require that we should enlarge upon these details.

There is however, another class of evidence which shows that the Lord has appeared under a personal aspect. It consists of passages in which mention is made of "the angel of the Lord."* The term angel simply signifies a messenger, — the sent — but it is commonly used in the Scriptures to denote, when employed in a good sense,† a spiritual personage, who has his residence in heaven. It also denotes something of the Lord, but what, can only be known by a study of the series of things treated of. This indeed, seems to follow from the circumstance, that the angelic state and character are derived from the Lord, and dependent

* Judges ii. 4, &c., &c. There are also the phrases "Angel of the Covenant," Mal. iii. 1. "Angel of His presence," Isaiah lxiii. 9, and "Angel of God," Exodus xiv. 19, &c. By the Angel of the Covenant, and the Angel of His presence, are meant the Lord in respect to the truth and the good which He would bring about by His manifestation in the world. The Angel of the Covenant is the message of Divine truth which is the medium of conjunction; hence His Word is called a covenant; and the Angel of His Presence is the message of Divine good which is the medium of salvation; hence it is said, the Angel of His Presence saved them. The Angel of God is distinguished from the Angel of the Lord or Jehovah, as the message of Truth is distinguished from the message of Love. The names God and Jehovah, are throughout the Word, used discriminately in strict conformity with the theological idea intended to be expressed in the immediate context, and it is astonishing that the writers never use any of these Divine names arbitrarily or at mere random, but always consistently with the subject treated of. See Dr. Michelson, in *Kitto's Bib. Cycl. Art. God*, and Dr. Havernick's *Historical Criticism of the Original Tongues of the Old Testament*.

† It is said in a good sense, because it is sometimes used with an opposite meaning, thus, "the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41; the dragon and his angels, Rev. xii. 9.

upon Him. It is therefore plain, that in the employment of an angel, either for the communication of a Divine message, or the purpose of manifestation, the Lord had recourse to no other agency than that proceeding from Himself. But the term Angel of the Lord is intended to express a peculiar idea. At first sight it may appear to indicate an envoy, but an examination of the context, in which such phrases occur, will show that the idea designed to be expressed, is that of the Supreme Being manifest in the Person of an Angel. For instance, it is written, that the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. And when the *Lord* saw that Moses turned aside to see that great sight, *God* called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon *God*. (Exodus iii. 2, 4, 6.) Here the context shows, that that which in the beginning of the narrative is called the Angel of the Lord, is the Lord Himself, manifest in and speaking through an angelic Personage. A similar case is mentioned in the History of Gideon. "The Angel of the Lord appeared unto him and said unto him, The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man. And Gideon said, if the Lord be with us, why then has all this befallen us? And the Lord looked upon him and said Go, in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel. And the Lord said unto him, Surely I will be with thee." (Judges vi. 12-16.) From this it is evident, that the Angel of the Lord, was an angel filled with the Divine presence; and that for the time, his personal individuality was laid aside, that the Lord Himself might appear therein. Another narrative in the same Book says, "an Angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim and said, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I swore unto your fathers." * Here also by the Angel of the Lord, is plainly meant the Divine, who became manifest thereby; for it was not an angel, but the Lord who led the people out of Egypt, and conducted them into Canaan. Other instances of a similar character might be cited, but these are sufficient. They agree with those other Divine appearances before referred to, in showing that the idea of God, which Revelation presents to the

* Judges ii. 1. The disagreement of commentators on this passage is remarkable. Some think the angel was Phineas, others that he was a prophet. These were the notions of Chaldee paraphrasts, and the ancient Jews. Maimonides thinks the circumstance was a dream. Menochius states that the angel was Michael. Dr. A. Clarke thinks he was some extraordinary human messenger, who resided at Gilgal. Henry and Scott, consider him to have been the Son of God, and Bishop Patrick thought he was Jehovah himself; and it appears surprising to us how any other conclusion can be reasonably arrived at, considering the terms of the text.

acceptance of man, is that of a glorious *Personal* Being. We see plainly that under the Old Testament dispensation, one of the mediums which were provided to convey to man an idea of God, was that which is called the Angel of the Lord; the narratives however, always explaining, that the appearance made under that designation was, *essentially*, the Lord Himself. But the angelic form is the human form, and, therefore, those revealed appearances of the Divine were, to make use of the language of the prophet, "in the likeness of a man." And this agrees with the teachings of philosophy, which are, that man cannot think of the Divine otherwise than as human. The love and wisdom which flow into him from God, produce in him this idea as their natural result. It is they that make him man, and so form in him the conclusion that the Being in whom they infinitely exist, must be Divinely human.

It is well known that the ancient Jews were in the habit of considering God as a wise and venerable person. This doctrine they doubtless drew from the Pentateuch, in which they read of man being created in the image of God, and of God's appearance to Abraham and others. It is also quite evident that the enlightened Gentiles of antiquity regarded God as a Personal Being; this might have been derived to them from the traditions of the churches which had existed before their time; and it seems to have remained among their descendants; for when they began to worship a plurality of gods, as at Athens and Rome, they always regarded those deities as persons. Nor does it appear that this idea has ever been banished from the Church, in which His Revelations have been received. It may have been viewed under various aspects, and gloom and sunshine may have attended its existence, but it has never been lost sight of; and those statements of the Bible, to which we have referred, were made for the purpose of preserving it.

So long as man's spiritual principles were open for the reception of an orderly influence from the Lord, so long was he gifted with an inward perception respecting the Personality of the Divine; but in process of time he turned himself away from the love of interior and spiritual things, and finally sunk beneath the influence of sensuality and naturalism. Yet even in the last stage of his moral decline, the idea of God, as a Person, has clung to him with remarkable pertinacity. It is conspicuous among the Heathens, and made visible by their idols. It was originally impressed upon the mind in its most elevated developments; and it has remained with it, declining indeed as to its perfection, as man has descended into the mire of his corruptions, yet clinging to his imagination even in his deepest ruin. The reason of all this is because God has ever been solicitous to

preserve this idea among His people, and therefore we find, when man was completely fallen by his rejection of all spiritual goodness and truth, that God provided an ultimate reality for this idea by becoming manifest in the flesh. He who before-time had been seen by the Prophets as a Glorious Man in his own kingdom, and who appeared to the fathers by the assumption of an angelic nature, did, when the fulness of time was come, present himself to the world by the assumption of a nature that was human.

Hence we learn that it was Jehovah himself who, in all these cases, became manifest. It is a common opinion that Human nature was assumed by an 'Eternal son ; * but we have not been enabled to discover a sentence descriptive of such a notion from Genesis to Malachi. What is said in the Jewish Scriptures on the subject of the "Son of God" is prophetic; indicating that which should be, not that which was. The first statement of the actual existence of that which is so called, is delivered in the New Testament. The language of the annunciation to Mary was, "that Holy Thing which *shall* be born of thee *shall* be called the Son of God," † — thus it *was* not, but it *should* be — it was to be the consequence of a certain process which the narrative declares. That, then, which is called the Son of God, is God's manifestation by means of man's nature, as that called the Angel of God was God's manifestation by means of an angel's nature. In both cases it was human nature, but in one it was human nature as it exists in heaven, in the other, human nature as it exists in the world.

This view of the case enables us to surmount many difficulties, and to reconcile some seeming contradictions. For instance, Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face ;" (Gen. xxxii. 30 ;) and it is written, that "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." (Exodus xxxiii. 11.) But these assertions are not to be understood as declaring, that the

* Dr. A. Clarke says *Com.* on Luke i. 35. "The doctrine of the *Eternal Sonship* of Christ is, in my opinion, anti-Scriptural, and highly dangerous. This doctrine I reject for the following reasons.

1st. I have not been able to find any express declaration in the Scriptures concerning it. 2dly. If Christ be the Son of God as to his *Divine* nature, then he cannot be eternal ; for a *son* implies a *father*, and a father implies, in reference to the *son*, precedency in *time*, if not in nature too. 3dly. If Christ be the *Son* of God, as to his *Divine* nature, then the Father is of necessity prior, consequently superior to him. 4thly. Again, if this *Divine nature* were begotten of the Father, then it must be in *time* ; i. e., there was a time when it did not exist, and a period when it began to exist. 5thly. To say that He was *begotten* from all *eternity* is, in my opinion, absurd ; and the phrase *Eternal Son*, a positive self-contradiction."

† Luke i. 35. See the author's work on the Deity of Jesus Christ asserted, for a more enlarged examination of the subject.

Deity has been seen as to his essential nature; it is plain that they can be applicable only to the manifesting mediums. Communications from the infinite to the finite, cannot be effected in any other way. God presents himself in form to man, who is compelled, by his mental constitution, to think in form respecting him; He therefore can only have been heard, or seen, through some suitable medium. Hence it is expressly said, "no man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath brought Him forth to view;"* "ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen his shape;" (John v. 37;) "not that any man hath seen the Father, save He which is of God, he hath seen the Father;"† "God, who dwelleth in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see." (1 Tim. vi. 13.) The precision of these statements leaves us no room to suppose, that the *essential Divine* has been seen by any man in the universe; and therefore we conclude, that that which some men have been permitted to behold under this title, has been human *mediums* suited to convey to them such an idea respecting Him as was adequate to their use and comprehension. The Infinite transcends all finite conceptions, and therefore all its manifestations to men have been effected through the instrumentality of something that is human. What is incomprehensible cannot become an object of thought; and that of which we cannot think, we cannot love. But man is commanded to have faith in God, and so to think of him; and to love God, and so to know him. How are these duties to be performed? Towards what are our ideas and affections to be directed? It may be said, that the faith which is required is a faith in the Divine promises; and that the love which is desired, is a love of the virtues of the Divine teachings. Doubtless these things are included in those duties: but the command goes farther, and requires that we should have some idea of his person. Surely the Lord, in making so many manifestations of himself, must have intended this as one of their results. It is utterly impossible to contemplate the descriptions of these phenomena and avoid this conclusion. To say that the Lord has been seen in the accommodated way referred to, and that that sight was not intended to produce in our minds any impression

* John i. 18. "What is here rendered *hath brought Him forth* is expressed in the common version of the New Testament, by *hath declared him*; but the original term is *exēgesato*, from the verb *exegeomai* which properly signifies to *expound* or *make manifest*." — Rev. J. Clowes, M. A.

† John vi. 46. It may occur to some, that the Lord said, "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," John xiv. 9, and this may seem in opposition to the above statement; but the declaration, "he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father," simply means, he that hath seen me, hath seen all that it is possible to see of the Father.

respecting his personality, would not be a sensible assertion. He has been brought forth to view for this very purpose. It follows then, that to have faith in God and to love him, also imply that we should intellectually recognize him as existing in a Divinely human person. This we consider one of the most remarkable Peculiarities of the Bible; it discloses to us a principle of thought respecting the Supreme, which philosophy embraces, and which has clung to universal man in a form more or less imperfect, during the whole history of his religious existence.

An objection may here be taken on the ground of the literal sense of Scripture being representative; and consequently, that the descriptions adverted to are employed to convey to us, not the actual, but a figurative notion of the Deity. Without doubt the literal sense of Scripture consists of Divinely-selected symbols; but still those symbols have a meaning, which, according to the rule laid down in a preceding chapter, is to be ascertained and determined by the evidence which that sense affords. As symbols they must point to some spirituality; we cannot reasonably say that those representations of the Deity are symbols without a Divine relative; as figures they must be the figures of something; as verbal pictures they must be intended to impress upon our mind some distinctive idea. We fully admit that the above narratives respecting the Deity are eminently figurative, because they present to the imagination finite forms respecting Him who is certainly infinite. They are figurative in this sense, but still they suggest that He of whom they are the figures, is Divinely human. It is obvious that the person of the Deity so designated is not to be apprehended in any gross sense. It implies that that which is truly human is actually Divine; and consequently that its manifestations to men can be effected only through some appropriate finite mediums. That which is simple humanity in man, is Divine humanity in God, and that which is finite humanity with us, is infinite humanity in Him. We do not see how this conclusion can be avoided; for what is humanity but goodness and truth? and surely, these in God, are Divine and infinite. Moreover, these principles are not abstractions; they are positive existences; and therefore they exist in, and are manifested by a certain personality. It is on this account that man is called the image of God: not merely a moral and intellectual image, but a personal one, for all that Revelation teaches, and that philosophy has observed, show that personality is proper to morality and intellect.

The whole of this argument resolves itself into this simple form. As God is *esse* he must also have *existere*. Existence is

not to be separated from its subject. Love is the inmost — the *esse* of the Divine ; and because love — intelligent love — is not to be thought of apart from personality, that must be its proper *existere*. It may indeed be said, that this conception is but an approximation to the truth. This must be admitted. Still it is agreed, that this conception is true so far as it extends ; it places the human thought in a right direction respecting the Divine ; and although it does not reach Him as He is, in his absolute infinitude, it brings our minds into proximity with His actual manifestations.

We are aware that this is a defined view of the subject not commonly entertained. Some among those who generally speak of God as a person, are unwilling that any idea should be attached to that expression. (See the first of “the xxxix Articles,” in the book of Common Prayer.) They seem to think, that whensoever the human mind ventures into a region of thought, by which an idea respecting God may be entertained, that he is deprived of the mystery and majesty by which he must ever be surrounded. But how futile is this ; the wise man is no less wise because he condescends to teach the simple. Is not such an act an extension of his wisdom ? Why then should God be considered less mysterious or majestic, because, by the gift of capacities, He has enabled us, and by manifestations taught us, how we are to think of Him ? Are not such vouchsafements parts, so to speak, of his mysteriousness and majesty ? Have they who have rejected such thoughts, duly reflected upon the consequences ? Has it ever occurred to them, that where there is no *idea* of God there is no *belief* in him — that belief always includes an idea, and that the belief is according to the idea ? There are some who profess to believe in an invisible Divinity ; but what is their belief ? Upon examination, it will be found to consist in what they call the *ens universi*, the being of the universe, and not in the being of God. With them the invisible God is the first principles of nature, which cannot become an object of faith, because no idea can be formed of them. This is the God of Deism. Ought not these considerations to induce men to reflect upon the character of their faith ? There are some among professing Christians who do not seem to see a clearer way. Dr. Burnet states, that “God is one pure and simple act ;” (Exposition of xxxix Articles. Article i. p. 32 ;) but this scarcely raises the mind above the form of the sentence. Creation, indeed, is an *act* of the Creator, but in what sense the Creator is an “*act*” will not be easy to comprehend.

The idea of God being a Divine person is not to be confounded

with the Anthropomorphism * of the fourth and fifth centuries. That doctrine, as understood at those periods, so far as history has recorded it, seems to have been a *sensual* rather than an *intellectual* apprehension of the Supreme Being, attributing to him merely human properties and consequent mutability. Nothing can be further from our view of the subject than this; and those errors arose from viewing Him from person to essence rather than from essence to person. This is an important distinction to be observed in considerations of this kind. They who think of God from his person merely, will needs think of him from corporeity and dimensions, and thus materially; in this case how can they avoid thinking materially of his essence also. This was the great fault of some of the Greek philosophers on this subject: and some of the early Christian "fathers" fell into this mistake.† The consequence was, that with the former it originated a plurality of Gods, and with the latter a plurality of persons in the Godhead. One error is sure to beget another. To have any enlightened idea respecting the personality of God, it is requisite to commence from meditations concerning his essence. And an idea of the essence of God includes in it ideas of His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence; also of his mercy, grace, infinity, and eternity; likewise of these attributes as creating, preserving, redeeming, and saving. Now all these can be perceived to be spiritual activities, and consequently they who think spiritually of the Divine essence, will be led thereby to think spiritually of the Divine Person; the essence will be first in the thought of the spiritually minded, and the person will be last; but as the first is a spiritual conception, so will be the last. This may be illustrated in various ways. If

* Anthropomorphism is said to have been introduced about the year 340, by Andæus, whom Mosheim describes as "a man of remarkable virtue." The Italian divines of Vicenza, about the year 938, were charged with holding the same doctrines. They, however, formed no sect, nor have the precise views which they held upon this subject been preserved. Dr. Neander considers that some gross views of Anthropopathy prevailed early in the third century; he says "the coarse and carnal ideas which attribute human passions to the Divine nature, were derived by carnally-minded Jews, and ignorant Christians, cleaving to the letter from certain misunderstood passages of the Old Testament. Thus occasion was afforded to Marcion to represent the God of the Old Testament, as in reality such a being as those persons had pictured him." — *History of Christian Religion*, vol. I. p. 968. There can be no doubt that ancient Anthropomorphism included Anthropopathy, and Anthropopoiësis, so that those who could ascribe human passions and human actions to God, were not likely to have very clear ideas of his person.

† See Dr. Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, vol. i. pp. 102, 200, with notes by the translator, John Harrison, M. A. Tertullian, Melito, and others are said to have been "unable to abstract the mind from ocular experience, so as to believe in the existence of an incorporeal God."

we think of our neighbor from his person only, we think materially : but if we think of him from his mind and character, we think morally, and in thinking morally of his mind we think morally of his person. So with respect to any satisfactory knowledge of the spiritual world. They who think of it from space, of course think of it from ideas of the natural world, and thus attain no information on which the mind can rest ; but they who reflect upon it as a condition of affection and mind, think of it from a spiritual ground and then see that it is the result of state. Similar reasonings may be applied to the Word, which has a spirit as well as a letter. They who read the Scriptures and think of their meaning merely from the historical and worldly things which they relate, obviously think from a sensual principle respecting them, and hence it is difficult to prevent unworthy notions from intruding upon the mind and disturbing its belief ; but they who, when reading the Word, meditate on the goodness of the Lord, the purity of his kingdom, and the duty of a loving obedience to his laws, think from a spiritual ground respecting the letter, and are thus enabled to see and revere its sanctity.

The importance then of thinking of God from his essence, and thence of his person, is obvious ; by this course, material notions on the subject are avoided, and a spiritual idea respecting Him is developed. This is indispensable to the existence of right religion among the human race. The nature of man is such that he cannot form any idea concerning abstract principles. He must give them an intellectual embodiment in his mind, or they will soon be dissipated and become as nothing to him. Hence it is evident that the idea of God would pass away from the world, if it were not permitted to exist in such embodiment ; and to convince men that a personal conception respecting him is both orderly and true, he has been pleased so to appear before the spiritual eyes of selected individuals ; and to cause narratives of the phenomena to be written in his Word for the instruction of all future ages. Such are the teachings of the Old Testament ; and those of the New, as we shall presently see, contribute forcibly to their confirmation.

At the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, men had become peculiarly natural and sensual. The fall of man at that period was consummated, — the fulness of time had come. Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh could have been saved. Men had for some time thought God to be such a one as themselves. "The wicked would not learn righteousness ; in the land of uprightness he dealt unjustly, and would not behold the majesty of the Lord." (Isaiah xxvi. 10.) Dead men were worshipped as gods, and demons were supposed to preside over all things, and the retention of all correct ideas respecting the true God, was in jeopardy, and about to be relinquished. Of these

facts, the religious history of the world, somewhat less than two thousand years ago, affords abundant evidence.* At that period there took place one of the most august phenomena mentioned in Revelation; God became "manifest in the flesh." (1 Tim. iii. 16.) God, Whom the perversity of men had nearly banished from the domain of faith and love, was pleased to come into the world, and thereby make a peculiar Revelation of Himself. Several purposes of infinite benevolence and wisdom were to be accomplished by this momentous circumstance, but it seems plain, that one of them was intended to show us how we are to think of God — namely, that He is Divinely human. This idea is involved in the fact of his having become the Immanuel — God with us. Those passages in which God, under his new name of Jesus Christ, assures us that He and his Father are one; (John x. 30;) that he who seeth Him seeth the Father, and that the Father dwelleth in Him, (John xiv. 9, 10,) together with the express declaration of the apostle "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," (Col. ii. 9,) with many other evidences of the same import which could be produced, all concur in presenting the above idea to the human mind. It seems to stand out in prominent relief upon all the teachings of the New Testament, and it is inseparable from the acts in which, as the Redeemer and only wise God our Savior, (Jude 25,) he was engaged. Moreover, it is further said of this manifestation, that "He was in the form of God," (Phil. ii. 6,) "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." (Heb. i. 3.) By means of the assumption of humanity, the Supreme Being has made the fullest possible Revelation of Himself to man — a Revelation adapted to keep alive some idea of God, in the lowest condition of the percipient subject. He whose existence from eternity has been distinguished by humanity in its first principles, did also, by becoming flesh and dwelling among us, (John

* "It is notorious that the nations of antiquity, Greek and Romans as well as barbarous, dedicated temples, not only to the virtues, fortitude, love, piety, and the like, but also to the vices, fear, pallor, pleasure, &c., and worshipped even the elements water, fire, air; in short went so far as to consecrate even diseases themselves. There was no folly too gross for the superstition of ancient nations. I consider that the ancients who consecrated the elements, diseases, virtues, and vices, worshipped not the things themselves but the genii that presided over them. It is an opinion of the remotest antiquity, that there exists nothing, however vile and abject, no disease of the mind, no virtue, that is not under the protection and control of some particular demon or genius. This doctrine is said to have been derived originally from the Chaldeans; the earliest inhabitants of Greece were imbued with it; and it is no less certain that this opinion was propagated from the people to the possessors of wisdom themselves, having been adopted by Pythagoras and Plato, philosophers of the highest authority." — Note to Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, by T. Harrison, M. A., vol. ii. pp. 283, 284.

i. 14.) take upon himself humanity in its last principles, and with this fact before us, we are enabled to attach a definite meaning to those expressions which say He is "the first and the last." (Rev. i. 11.) It seems then impossible to deny, upon Scripture evidence, that the Incarnation was an event by which we are taught the personality — the absolute manhood of God — a manhood that is not creaturely but creative, and in which every perfection is infinite and immutable. Doubtless the manifestation of Jehovah by this means was an astounding circumstance; but it was an astounding condition of mankind which had rendered it necessary. "Jehovah saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor, therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, it sustained him." (Isaiah lix. 15, 16.) By seeing no *man* is denoted, that no good was observable, and by wondering that there was no intercessor, is signified concern on account of there being no truth as the medium for its communication. Salvation is deliverance from this state, and that was brought by the *arm of Jehovah*, that *arm* denoting the humanity which he assumed for the purpose.

The Tripersonal branches of the Christian world, though acknowledging that "God was manifest in the flesh" do not consider that it was Jehovah who has thus accommodated Himself to the requirements of the earth; they say it was His Son. But this idea falls to the ground when it is seen, as we have previously shown, that that which is called the Son of God was brought into existence by means of the incarnation. The Scriptures emphatically assure us, that it was Jehovah who was to come. "Thus saith Jehovah — Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah." (Zech. ii. 8, 10.) They also inform us that the way in which He would come, would be by immaculate conception; "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel;"* and they are equally explicit in

* Isaiah vii. 14. Extensive disputations have been carried on respecting the meaning of the word IMMANUEL in this verse, and Dr. Henderson, in his notes upon the text, has given a summary of the various opinions which have been held, with their respective authorities. That which underlies very much of the controversy is a scepticism concerning the fact predicted! Our opinion of its true signification is given above. We admit from the use of the name Immanuel among the Jews, that considered in itself, it needs not to be interpreted in a strict sense, but when viewed in relation to its context, in its application by Matthew (i. 23) and in its connection with the whole narrative of the Lord's advent into this world, the conclusion that its principal reference is to that circumstance, becomes irresistible. "The prophet," says the Rev. S. Noble, "announces that a virgin *should* conceive and bear a son; and the evangelist declares that a virgin *was* with child and brought forth a Son," which was called the Son of God. — *Important Lectures*, p. 139.

declaring, "that the holy thing, which should be born, should be called the Son of God."* It was then, Jehovah who was manifested by means of the Incarnation, and the humanity with which He thereby clothed Himself for the purpose of communicating with the world, is that which is called the Son of God; therefore the two terms Jehovah, and the Son of God, do not express a plurality of Supreme Beings, but a unity in the Divine Person, such as is indicated by the phrases essence and form, or soul and body; in this case, a more ultimate form or body than had previously existed. They who admit the Incarnation of Deity to have taken place, cannot, on the ground of supposed impossibility, object to this view of the case: since that which is conceded to have been possible with God the Son, cannot have been impossible with God the Father!

But there are some who feel the idea of the Incarnation of God as too difficult for admission, and hence the genuineness of the narratives which relate it have been called in question.† These however have sustained the shock of criticism, and their truth has brightened by the efforts of inquiry. We do not undertake to dissect the Scepticism, out of which the feeling adverted to has arisen; but it seems plainly connected with a defective and imperfect consideration of Divine phenomena. Could not He who created the *universe* from Himself, also create a *humanity* from Himself? Surely He who has displayed his attributes upon every object, might, most reasonably, when an occasion of mercy required it, reveal His person in one that was an appropriate form for it. The notion of difficulty therefore, is without any weight in such a consideration. But still it may be urged, that the means said to have been adopted were so unusual! Certainly this was the case; but then the object to be accomplished was one of the most extraordinary in the history of events. The effect is according to the cause. A marvellous result was not to be brought about by ordinary means. The production of the first human pair without any natural parentage whatever, presents to our minds an idea much more difficult for philosophic description, than that of the production of a humanity by means of a mother without the aid of natural paternity. Although the idea of a virgin's conceiving and bringing forth a son belongs not to the world's experience, the Scriptures assure us that such

* Luke i. 35. The evidence for each of the above points could be easily extended, but the object is rather to present an idea, incidental to the general subject, with precision, than to produce extensive proofs. These however, with elaborate arguments, may be seen in the *True Christian Religion*. Chap. ii. *Of the Lord the Redeemer*.

† See note on Matt. i. 17, in "The New Testament in an improved version, upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's new Translation."

an event has once transpired. This "mystery of Godliness" is not to be explained upon any principles of ordinary law; if it could, that would be a strong reason for doubting the miraculous character which is claimed for it. There was the absence of natural paternity for the purpose of assuring us of the presence of a Divine paternity. That which in ordinary generation is supplied by the father is the groundwork of a spiritual organism, adapted for the reception of life from the Lord; but that which was produced in the case of the Incarnation, by "the power of the Highest," was, so to speak, the germ of a Divine organism, to be afterwards developed as a special indwelling of Jehovah himself.

It is of importance to our argument to notice this idea respecting the germ of a Divine organism, to be afterwards developed as a special indwelling of Jehovah; because this, from first to last, was *immediately* derived from His Divine *esse*; and it is to be carefully distinguished from that merely physical organism, which was procured *mediately* through the instrumentality of the mother. This latter was an additional organism, required for natural manifestation in the world; in like manner as man's natural body is an additional organism to that which constitutes his spiritual body or soul; and being material was brought within the laws of nature, to suffer when injured, and to die through a sufficient infliction.

This outward personality of God constituted the flesh, in which he was manifested to the natural eyes of men. It was the medium for certain Divine appearances in the world, but was not itself Divine. That which was derived from the mother was such as a mother was capable of supplying, and being material was not convertible into what is Divine; nothing of the created can be transmutable into that of the Creator. The Divinity of Jesus Christ — that in him which we regard to be the Supreme Deity — is to be considered altogether apart from that material form by which he effected a physical manifestation in the world. That form was successively removed, as the work of Redemption was accomplished — thus as temptation, suffering, and death were overcome; and in its stead was developed in *fulness*, that "glorious body" of which the apostle speaks, the original *germ* of which was, at the virgin's conception, provided by "the power of the Highest." This glorious body was in some measure disclosed in vision to the three disciples at the transfiguration, concerning which it is said, that "His face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." (Matt. xvii. 2.) This body, which was derived immediately from Jehovah, successively developed, and fully so after the crucifixion, is that which constituted the person in which he rose, and in which the Lord

appeared to his disciples. And thus He who had been a Divine Person in first principles from eternity, was pleased for us men, and for our salvation, to become a Divine Person in last principles in time.

Every one is aware, that the person in which the Lord appeared *after* the resurrection was distinguished by an aspect different from that in which he was seen before, and up to the period of the crucifixion. This circumstance is peculiarly marked, and it proves to us the distinctive character of each. In reference to his resurrection Person, it is distinctly said, "that he appeared in another form." (Mark xvi. 12.) "The Divine is not in one subject different from what it is in another; but one created subject is different from another; for there do not exist two things the same, and therefore, each thing is a different continent whereby the Divine in its image appears various." (*Divine Love*, 54.) Hence it was that Mary and Magdalene did not recognize Him at first. The disciples who saw Him on the shore of the sea of Tiberias, knew him not; neither did those to whom he appeared on their way to Emmaus; and the eleven to whom he presented Himself, supposed that they had seen a spirit. (John xx. 15; Luke xxiv. 16-37.) Whensoever He was seen *after* the resurrection, it was with the *spiritual*, and not with the *natural* sight of the beholder. His person was no more to be seen in a *natural*, but in a *spiritual* way; and therefore it was, that he could appear in the midst of the disciples, notwithstanding "the doors were shut," (John xx. 19,) and vanish from their sight (Luke xxiv. 31) when they returned to their normal condition of beholding. The instantaneous manner in which He made his appearance among them, and the sudden way in which he ceased to be visible, can only be accounted for on the fact of the opening and closing of men's spiritual eyes. He who had said "lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," (Matt. xxviii. 20,) was not really absent, though it required a specific kind of vision to recognize His presence. He who declared that he had all power in heaven and on earth * was not a material but a Divine Per-

* Matt. xxviii. 18. The whole passage runs thus, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," and from the occurrence of the word *given*, hesitation has been experienced to acknowledge the passage as expressing the absolute omnipotence of Jesus. Those who hold that He is one of three persons in the Godhead, suppose that he is given to share omnipotence with his Father and the Spirit: and those who do not believe in his Divinity, intimate that it was delegated for a certain purpose. Now the notion of omnipotence being shared by several is not very satisfactory, nor does this explain the idea of its being given to one, when it is maintained that "none is afore or after the other: none is greater or less than another." And the notion of delegated omnipotence — that the attributes of God could be

sonage; who, because he possesses the attributes of omnipresence and omnipotence, must be the Supreme and only God.

It is true that He said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing;" (John xx. 27;) and from this, the cursory reader may infer that the Lord's person was still material, and still retaining the wounds of crucifixion. But he will be of a different opinion, when he reflects with more discrimination on the facts of the case. Thomas had previously asserted "except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John xx. 25.) Having made up his mind upon these points, it is plain that his state would not permit him to see the Lord under any other aspect, or to hear of any other evidence. When therefore, the Lord appeared to him, his own predetermination induced this aspect. Still there is no intimation that he proceeded to take the proof that was offered him. His seeing is recognized, but not his feeling, and therefore he said, "my Lord and my God." Why should He who had triumphed over death, retain the marks by which it was inflicted? The removal of death from himself was surely attended by an obliteration of the means through which it was produced. If the knife of the surgeon does not reach the spiritual body of man, why should the nails and the spear of the soldier have reached the "glorious body" of the Redeemer? How is it perfect, if it is mutilated, or even bears the cicatrice of mutilation? Still no other evidence than an

transferred to a man — needs no refutation. It may be said, that he who receives a gift cannot be omnipotent, because there was another who had the power to confer it; and also, that he, who gave away his omnipotence, must therefore have ceased to be a God. Other difficulties may be urged, by which the systems above adverted to are considerably embarrassed. What view then is to be taken for their removal? The express statement of Jesus Christ, "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," must be reconciled with an equally plain assertion of Jehovah; namely, "my glory will I not give to another," Isaiah xlii. 8. And we conceive that this reconciliation can be effected, and all the seeming difficulties removed, by the acknowledgment of the Scriptural fact, that Jesus Christ was Jehovah in his Humanity — and that this Humanity was gifted with omnipotence in consequence of its union with the essential Divinity, and this Humanity possesses all power in the Church, whether existing in Heaven or on earth; it being the only medium through which are dispensed the gifts and graces of the Almighty. This may be illustrated by the soul and body of man. The soul, by means of its will and thought, communicates all its powers for action to the body, without relinquishing any of its force; and nevertheless, the body, in that respect, may be said to possess it all. Thus, the invisible Divinity communicated all power to its assumed humanity, without any dispossession of itself, and the humanity received it without drawback or diminution, because, together, they constitute the one true personal and omnipotent God.

appearance of this nature, would have been satisfactory to the sceptical condition of Thomas's mind ; it therefore was permitted him so to see the Lord ; but that it was not that high evidence, which met the Lord's approval, is apparent from the sequel, in which He said, " Thomas, because thou hast *seen* me thou hast believed ; blessed are they that have *not* seen, and yet have believed." (John xx. 29.) The Lord never intended, by this, to express his approbation of a blind faith, or to intimate that a condition of ignorance was a state of blessedness. No, no ! The sentiment he was desirous of communicating by this statement was, that Thomas had seen and believed after a way which accorded with his own prejudices, but that they are blessed — *i. e.*, in a superior state, and possess a truer insight into the actual character of the Lord's Glorified Person, who do not *so* see, and yet believe.* The Lord is not really that which he appears to be in the eyes of the prejudiced and the faithless.

It is true that Jesus said, " behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself ; handle me, and see ; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." (Luke xxiv. 39.) This, doubtless, is declaratory of his personal existence, and of its adaptation to the spiritual discernment of the disciples. " Flesh and bones " are not to be understood in any material sense, nor is it necessary to consider the reference to " hands and feet " as implying a direction to examine the print of the nails. The state of the disciples in general was not of a character to require that kind of evidence to identify Him. That state was peculiar to Thomas, and such evidence was granted for the reasons assigned. Moreover, there was another feature developed in the case before us. The disciples " were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." (Luke xxiv. 37.) It was under these circumstances, that the Lord invited them to inspect His person to satisfy themselves of His identity ; and it was to correct their misapprehensions respecting Him that he said, " a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." By this, the existence of spirits is conceded, and the distinctive condition of His own being very clearly asserted. The disciples would not have been alarmed, nor have considered the Lord's appearance

* On Thomas's state, Dr. A. Clarke has the following judicious observations. " 1st. His unbelief was utterly *unreasonable* : ten of his brethren witnessed that they had seen Christ, verse 25 ; but he rejected their testimony. 2ndly. His unbelief became *obstinate* ; he was determined not to believe, on any evidence that it might please God to give him ; he would believe according to his own *prejudices*, or not at all. 3rdly. His unbelief became *presumptuous* and *insolent* ; a view of the person of Christ will not suffice : he will not believe that it is he, unless he put his finger into the holes made by the nails, &c. Thomas had *lost much good* and *gained much evil*, and yet was insensible of his state." — *Commentary*.

as a spirit, if He had not been distinguished by some aspect which they were not accustomed to behold. Nor would they have been invited to "handle" Him, if he had not possessed a substantial existence, capable of being identified by the lowest state of orderly spiritual sensation. Still there is no intimation that they did handle Him; their fears appear to have been allayed by His assurance, and their faith was satisfied. Nevertheless, there was a peculiarity in their states, which required this kind of appeal to induce them to believe in His identity: for He said to Mary Magdalene, when she recognized Him, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended." (John xx. 17.) The very same reason for her not touching him still existed, when he said to his other disciples, "handle me." Why then should one party be forbidden to have recourse to a kind of evidence by which to establish his identity, and another be so distinctly invited to procure it? The answer can be given on no other ground than that of the distinctive states, and consequently, the different requirements of the parties concerned. Mary, when she beheld Him, at once evinced a calm and dignified conviction; and thus showed that she was distinguished by a superior state to those who were seized with trepidation on His appearance. Her belief was of an interior quality, and needed not for its support that kind of evidence which was required by their lower condition. They, as yet, were thinking of the Lord as the Messiah, who was to procure for the Jewish nation deliverance from the Roman yoke; and consequently nothing could satisfy them of His living identity, after the death they had witnessed, but such an appearance of Him as coincided with their remembrance; and therefore, He showed them His hands and His feet; nor can there be any doubt, but that the Lord was so distinguished, or that the disciples so beheld Him. The sight however, by which they saw Him, was somewhat above nature, and so also was the Divine personality which they beheld. When therefore, the Lord intimated He had flesh and bones, and hands and feet, He did not intend those expressions to be understood in a gross and physical sense. He was then beyond the reach of physical touch or vision. He designed by those statements to convey to His church the idea, that He is not a phantom, such as His disciples supposed Him to be, but a Divine substantial impersonation, brought into the lowest sphere of man's spiritual perception, by means of a glorified Humanity. The Angelic form in which He had been pleased to make His appearances before the incarnation, was a temporary assumption of humanity, with the view of approaching the interior spiritual discernments of men, but having by means of incarnation and glorification, assumed to Himself a permanent humanity in the world, He

could come into a lower degree of man's spiritual sight. It was for this purpose that He ceased to take upon Himself the nature of angels, and assumed the nature of man. Hereby He became a Savior to the uttermost, because He has thereby provided the mediums of presenting Himself to the lowest state of human thought, and so supplying the means for realizing the prediction that all should know Him from the least unto the greatest. (Jeremiah xxx. 34.) The Angelic nature assumed by Jehovah, not being sufficiently external to reach the debased condition into which mankind were fallen,—the existence of angels and spirits being also actually denied (Acts xxiii. 8)—He was pleased to put on the Human nature, and therein present himself to the world as a Divine Person more fully in the ultimates of manhood than the angels are. Thereby He has become the visible God in whom is the invisible. Jesus Christ is His "new name." (Rev. iii. 12.) It expresses the fully revealed idea of the Supreme, the Infinite, and Eternal, which is that of Jehovah in His glorified Humanity, the one only true God, in his lowest impersonation, whose inmost Divinity is called the Father, whose glorified Humanity is called the Son, and whose saving influences are called the Holy Spirit, and in whom, consequently, dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and thus He is "the only wise God our Savior."

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIONS AND DREAMS, CONSIDERED AS MEDIA THROUGH WHICH DIVINE REVELATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE.

ARGUMENT.—What is meant by visions. Associated with all religion which points out an hereafter. Sneered at by Scepticism. A belief in their occurrence not to be separated from the reception of Christianity. Imposition no evidence against them. Doubts within the Church respecting such phenomena. The tendency of our times. Dreams and visions attempted to be accounted for on natural causes. They will not solve those mentioned in the Scriptures. How the brain is concerned in the production of such phenomena. Man principally thinks and perceives by an influence from the spiritual world. Evidences in proof of this. Explanation of the spectral appearances sometimes attending derangements of the cerebral organs. An argument for the reality of visions, drawn from the appearances presented under such circumstances. They who have had true visions have had sound brains. The Fall produced an unfavorable state for seeing visions. They have since been specially granted for the particular purposes of Providence. Seen by the spiritual eyes only. Supernatural sights attended with some condition of the physical structure, not common to its normal state. Scripture indications of this idea. Visions in sleep. The physical action of the body in sleep somewhat different from what it is during wakefulness. How dreams are sometimes induced. The state of the brain in some way connected with dreams. Inquiry respecting it. Not

produced by its mechanical activity, but by man's spiritual associates. Spirits attendant on man during sleep. The purpose of their presence inquired into. How the incongruities of dreams are occasioned. Why men sometimes dream of that of which they have been thinking when awake. Divine visions and dreams attended with suitable congruity of the physical organs. The enjoyment of them a promised privilege. Distinction between those which were of God, and those which were not so. Visions, the only means by which the realities of another life can be brought within man's experience in this. Visions imply the existence of a spiritual world, and man's capacity for seeing it. The spiritual world not separated by space. Its nearness illustrated. Not an empty space. Real things therein. The spiritual world consists of three departments. The existences in each, in correspondence with the state of their inhabitants. Illustrations. The world of spirits as the first receptacle of man after the death of his body. The mixed character of man in this department, the ground of those extraordinary things which were seen in vision. Instances cited. Visions were for the most part sights of scenery belonging to this intermediate department in the spiritual world. Those of heaven and hell not numerous. Inquiry why men do not now see spiritual things, answered. Opening of the spiritual eyes attended with an abatement of the sensualities of the natural body. Other objects, rather than its inhabitants, have for the most part been presented in vision. Degrees of perfection in spiritual sight. The vulgar notion that when man passes into the other life, *all things* will be open to his inspection, not founded in reason or Scripture. Spirits may have visions to see things which are more interior than what belongs to their common states. Interior love a qualification for interior knowledge. The prophets not selected irrespective of such qualification. Spiritual sights presented in dreams. How men could distinguish between such, and those of an ordinary fantastic character. A distinction between dreaming of seeing an angel of the Lord, and an angel of the Lord appearing in a dream. Instances of simple dreams. That they were premonitions, and the images in them being representative, were Revelations. A summary exposition of the Revelations contained in the vision of the Lord's Transfiguration, and in the two dreams of Joseph.

SEVERAL of the circumstances referred to in the preceding chapter, were stated to have been seen in vision, and as visions were frequently experienced by some of the parties who were employed as the amanuenses of God's Word, it seems important that we should now investigate the nature of these phenomena.

By visions, we mean sights of supernatural objects, presented to the eyes of man's spirit. The Scriptures most distinctly assure us that such sights have been so seen; and a belief in this is unquestionably required of those who acknowledge the religion of the Bible to be true. Some ideas respecting such things have prevailed even among those to whom the Scriptures were unknown. No people appear to have been left entirely without some notions of the supernatural within and beyond themselves. History and tradition speak of instances that have occurred, with great confidence. Both the savage and the philosopher have believed in such occurrences; nor can any time be pointed out, in which this credibility has been withheld. This belief seems to be wonderfully impressed upon the general

mind, and intimately associated with every religion that points out an hereafter; hence it has at times, exercised a considerable influence upon society. That it has been abused for interested purposes, and that individuals have stoutly refused all credence to such facts, are well known. But what of that? most truths in the course of their development have been subjected to unfavorable treatment, and few of them have escaped the sneers of scepticism. These facts indicate the opinions of the parties concerned in them, but they furnish no argument against the truth that may be abused or denied. A belief in visions is not to be driven from society because the advancement of learning has discovered the mistakes of the ignorant, the superstitions of the credulous, or the frauds of the crafty. A belief that such phenomena have sometimes occurred cannot be separated from the full reception of Christianity. And although it must be confessed that the middle ages* were very rife with many *inventions* of this kind, and that some of those impositions were remarkably successful in obtaining credence; yet these circumstances ought not to set our minds against a belief, that supernatural things have been seen by man's supernatural sight. The duty of sensible men is to distinguish between the facts and the frauds. The counterfeits would not have been attempted, if there had not been some reality which society was known to respect. A forgery always presupposes something that is genuine.

The progress of knowledge has exorcised a large amount of superstition, and rescued society from many influences which were unfavorable to clear thinking upon spiritual subjects. But with these, there has grown up no inconsiderable amount of scepticism. It has come to pass, in many quarters of the Church, that doubt respecting the reality of visions is thought to be learned; and in some, a total disbelief in their occurrence is considered as a deliverance from the last remnant of superstition.†

* The middle ages are those which began soon after the destruction of the Roman empire in the west, in the fifth century; and continued up to the invention of printing, in the fifteenth century. The first centuries of the middle ages are sometimes called the dark ages.

† The prospectus of a series of works which are to issue from the Cambridge press to effect "the Restoration of belief," and now in the course of publication, gives the following reasons for the undertaking. "*First*, that disbelief under a somewhat new guise, is at this time openly avowed by perhaps a larger proportion of the educated classes than it has heretofore been: *secondly*, that a settled disbelief claims as its own, some who refuse to make such avowal, but whose state of mind can be no secret to their intimate friends; and *thirdly*, that many in all circles are much troubled and disgusted, and are robbed of their comfort, and are in danger of losing forever what they hold with a trembling grasp." This is a true description of a church which has come to its end — a confession coming from itself.

This is, in some respects, the natural consequence of being liberated from deception. Men frequently run to the opposite extremes, when it is discovered that they have been the victims of imposture; but they may be learned without being sceptics; and they may get rid of superstition without a renunciation of the Bible. A right course for securing both these advantages is to make ourselves acquainted with the true meaning of these Scriptural peculiarities.

The tendency of our times is to materialism. Religious philosophy has taken this turn, and visions are commonly attempted to be explained on the ground of some natural law. Dreams have received a similar treatment. Spiritualism is at a discount: nevertheless, these subjects do not appear to us to be placed in any clearer light by such investigations. Doubtless the progress of scientific knowledge has lifted somewhat higher the veil of Isis, but spiritual phenomena are not to be uncovered by a mere acquaintance with the laws of matter and motion. All visions are said to be the result either of mental or optical illusion; and both sorts are attempted to be accounted for on physical grounds. (See *Popular Encyclopædia*. Art. Visions.) According to this theory, no visions are real; all are deceptions! We are not of this opinion: many indeed may come under this category; * but we claim exemption for some. Optical illusions are occasioned by the presentation of some external object, under some circumstances which deceive the senses. Occurrences of this kind are well known, and it is pretty certain that they have sometimes been mistaken for spectral appearances, and that they will admit of satisfactory explanations upon optical principles. (See Dr. Brewster's *Natural Magic*.) But it will hardly be pretended that any thing of this kind could have occasioned the visions which are mentioned in the Word. There is nothing related in connection with them, so far as we have examined the narrations, suggestive of such an idea. They therefore do not admit of explanations upon these principles, nor are we disposed to concede that they may be brought under the category of mental illusions. These are said to be occasioned by some derangement of the physical system, in which extraordinary impressions are made upon the brain by some

* The occurrence of merely imaginary visions cannot well be questioned, and many of those which history has preserved, and tradition related, may fairly be placed in the catalogue of phantasms. Things seen in shade or moonlight, or even in open day, if the object be in a dark place, appear by the force of imagination to be something else than what they are, and the persons beholding them are persuaded that they are realities, though it is very plain that they are mere illusions, because in those cases it is nothing but natural objects which the imagination so converts. See *Letter on Demonology*, by Sir Walter Scott, for some illustrations of these cases.

irregularity or peculiarity in the circulation of the blood, and that these impressions are more or less vivid, according to the intensity of such motion. This simply means that the mechanical action of matter produces mind; which we cannot believe: it strikes us as something like saying that the circumference produces the centre; that nature originates God; and that body is the source of soul! But in rejecting this doctrine, we do not repudiate the facts that extraordinary impressions have been made upon, and spectral appearances presented to, the minds of men whose brains have been deranged. What we mean is, that those physical conditions are not their *producing* causes, but simply media through which they could be induced from a spiritual origin. The difference of texture in vegetation, or in other objects, does not originate the variety of colors which they display; that difference is a medium through which each color is evolved from light, as its proper source. An alteration in the texture, as in the case of a fading flower, enables light to show itself under some fresh aspect. So is it with the nature of those mental impressions which show variation, as a change takes place in the condition of the cerebral organs. A plain mirror shows a true reflection; one that is irregular, presents a distorted image. In neither case is the mirror the cause of the objects that are seen.

Man principally thinks and perceives by means of an influence from the spiritual world. The Scriptures say so. Angels who are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who are the heirs of salvation, (Heb. i. 14,) carry on their work by inducing favorable conditions of affection and thought; and the devil, which is a name for evil spirits in the complex, goeth about seeking whom he may devour, (1 Peter v. 8,) by instigating men to vice and falsehood. As there are angelic ministrations, so there are diabolical influences: and on what, in man, do they operate? Doubtless on his mind. The former are present with, and cherish all his good dispositions; the latter are present with, and excite all the evil propensities of his nature. Thus, these opposite conditions of man's moral existence are, as it were, the magnets by which each class of spirits is attracted to us, and in which they find some congenial dwelling-place. As men sink more and more into the filth of wickedness, evil spirits come more and more into possession: and on the other hand, as men ascend more and more into the beauty of holiness, angels not only rejoice in the repentance by which that state has been preceded, but they enter into a closer communion. We know of no facts on which the Scriptures speak with greater plainness than on these: men may be unwilling to believe them, but they cannot acknowledge the Divinity of the Word, and deny them.

Most of the difficulties which metaphysicians have experienced in their investigations of the human mind, are, we think, traceable to an oversight of these facts. That our thoughts and perceptions are from such an origin, does not always appear to us; and our voluntary efforts to produce them, seem to be opposed to this conclusion: but do not those very endeavors imply that there is a source extraneous to ourselves, from which to derive them? and have we not some proof of this fact in the circumstance, that thoughts are sometimes suddenly introduced to our mind without any consciousness of thinking? Every individual then is, as to his spirit, in association with his like in the spiritual world; and when his natural brains are in health, he thinks and perceives from that source according to his delights, genius, and character: but when they are deranged, that source of his ideas and thinking is prevented from showing itself in the ordinary way; and some peculiar conditions of it, which have come under the notice of scientific observers, have been attended by certain extraordinary impressions and appearances, not created by itself, but induced by spirits, because that derangement became a favorable vehicle for some inordinate display. The sights and impressions generally produced under these circumstances are of a spiritual kind. Impressions cannot be made upon the mind without an impresser: the eye cannot see an object unless there be an object to see. They are "mental illusions" in no other sense than that they are not natural appearances. There are spiritual realities as well as physical ones.* And it is only because the former appear like the latter, and are so described by the beholder, that they who hear the statement and do not see the fact, conclude the whole to be an illusion: and the beholders themselves are sometimes led to think so, because man, in his sensual state, will more readily acknowledge that he has been the victim of delusion, than believe in the existence of spiritual things.

* "There are purer substances, and these real, from which knowledges and thoughts exist, whose variations of form being animated and modified by an influx of life from the Lord, present them to the mind, whilst their agreeableness and harmonies, in succession, or simultaneously, affect the mind, and constitute what is called beautiful, pleasant, and delightful; spirits themselves are forms, that is they consist of continued forms, like men, but of a purer nature, and not visible to the bodily sight; and whereas these forms or substances are not to be seen by the corporeal eye, man at this day conceives no other than that knowledges and thoughts are abstract things; hence also, comes the folly of mankind in the present age, in that they do not believe that they have a spirit within them which is to live after the death of the body, when yet this spirit is a substance much more real than the substance of the material body; yea, if you are disposed to believe it, the spirit after being freed from the corporeal principles is that very body purified which the generality of mankind say they are to have at the Day of Judgment." — *Arcana Coelestia*, 3762.

The above appears to us satisfactorily to explain the cause of those spectral appearances, eccentricities of thought, and peculiar insanities, which are well known to accompany certain derangements of the cerebral organs. The same principle will apply to those cases in which certain injuries, or pressure on the brain, have been known to deprive the patient of temporary consciousness. Man cannot be conscious of his existence in the natural world, without a necessary amount of action on the part of his natural organization. But this does not prove the mind to be annihilated, any more than sleep, (in which man has no consciousness of being,) is a proof that he has ceased to be : or than a want of remembrance is any evidence that we never knew the object that is forgotten. See page 53, note †, for some additional remarks on this point.

Admitting the above views to be correct, we at once see that the very circumstances to which some parties refer, as proofs that visions have no reality out of the mind of the beholder, have a strong bearing the other way. If a deranged medullary system becomes the natural vehicle for presenting to man in the natural world, certain disorderly spiritual appearances, or ill-arranged thoughts, why may not a complete and perfect condition of that system be one of the mediums for presenting more direct knowledge of the orderly phenomena of the spiritual world? We see no objection to affirming the truth of this argument. On the contrary, we think it one of the conditions on which all orderly visions have been vouchsafed. We never read in the Scriptures of any thing inimical to this, characterizing the persons to whom they were vouchsafed. Primitive society experienced visions in an eminent degree. This follows from the intercourse Adam, and others, are stated to have had with the Lord : and doubtless, so long as they continued in their integrity, they were distinguished by such a physical condition. It is equally reasonable to believe, that the Fall disturbed that perfect organization ; and as sensuality came into the world with that catastrophe, it is plain that some new condition was thereby induced upon the cerebral substances of humanity, unfavorable to man's beholding of spiritual things. Sensuality closed the communication, nor is there any open vision when it prevails. Therefore, what is now considered as a well-organized and healthy cerebral structure, may be so only in reference to our degenerate condition : consequently we are not to expect from it any proper adaptability for the presentation of spiritual phenomena. Hence, such experiences are of rare occurrence ; still we do not see why the parties to whom they have been vouchsafed may not have had their natural brain, at least for the time, brought into a more direct correspondence with celestial and spiritual things, than was com-

mon to them in their normal condition. However this might have been, it is certain that visions have been granted on many occasions for the spiritual purposes of Providence; and some of our most important information respecting the spiritual world has been acquired through that means. It is however to be remembered, that, spiritual objects can only be seen by the spiritual eyes of men; and, in intimating it to be highly probable that on the occurrence of such sights, man's physical organism was brought into a favorable state, it is not to be supposed that such objects were ever beheld by their natural eyes; though, as before observed, it would doubtless appear so to those who saw them. This is very evident from the cases of Abraham, Lot, Moses, and Manoah, who are stated to have seen angels, without any direct intimation that they were not beheld with their bodily eyes.

To us it seems evident, that the presentation of supernatural objects before man's spiritual eyes, has, since his fall, always been attended with some inordinate conditions of certain organs of his natural body. It is well known that intense study is frequently accompanied by an increased length of respiration; also, that the pulsation is interfered with, and consequently that the ordinary circulation of the blood is somewhat deranged. If this takes place under such circumstances, surely other suitable changes may be expected to have taken place when men were gifted with a sight of supernatural realities. This, certainly, was the case with Moses and Paul. While the former was experiencing his vision on the mount, his physical aspect underwent some change, for when he descended it is said that "the skin of his face shone," and that when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw it, they were afraid to come nigh him.* The apostle also, said he knew a man in Christ Jesus, who was caught up to the third heaven, who saw paradise, and heard things which

* Exodus xxxiv. 30. It is curious to remark, that because the original term *karan* employed to express the condition of Moses's face, denotes a horn, as well as to shine out, that he has been represented by painters and sculptors as having horns. The statue of Moses by Michael Angelo in St. Peter's at Rome, is thus absurdly disfigured, the authority for so doing being a supposed close adherence to the Hebrew text. The idea of the face emitting a lustrous appearance under the circumstances in which he had been engaged, need not surprise us when we remember that joy and gladness, occasioned by a much less dignified position, will brighten up the countenance. — Sir Thomas Brown, in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*, book v. chap. ix, has a quaint exposure of the artist's absurdity, accompanied by some just reflections. Swedenborg is reported to have said that his eyes, on one occasion, were so remarkably disposed as they were observed to be by his attendant, "that by them spirits might see what is in our world;" and other physical conditions are related of him as the concomitants of his spiritual intercourse. See *Documents respecting him, collected by Dr. J. F. I. Tafel, of Tubingen, and edited in England by the Rev. J. H. Smithson*, p. 76, 69.

it is not possible to utter, but whether in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell. (2 Cor. xii. 2, 4.) Doubtless this was a kind of trance, in which the ordinary functions of his body were in some measure suspended; he would otherwise have been incapable of saying, he knew not whether the vision which he saw was *in* the body or *out* of the body. By this means his spiritual senses were quickened into a greater degree of sensibility, and therefore he could see and hear what it was not possible to describe or repeat, on his return to his normal condition.

Another circumstance bearing upon the general idea now before us is, that some of the visions mentioned in the Word, were produced during sleep. This of course, is implied in the "visions upon the bed," and "night visions," which are recorded. (Daniel vii. 1, 7.) In sleep, the body is in a different physical action from what is proper to it in a state of wakefulness. "In complete sleep, the sensorial power of the brain, the medulla oblongata, and the medulla spinales is suspended, while that of the sympathetic nerve undergoes no suspension." (Macnish on the *Philosophy of Sleep*, chap. iii.) "During wakefulness, every thing in every part of the body enjoys a kind of tension—the reverse is the case in sleep—the cerebrum collapses; (Swedenborg's *Animal Kingdom*, vol. ii. pp. 164, 165, note 1;) at which time the necessity of renovating the state requires that the transflux of the fluid through the nerves should not be interrupted by any voluntary determinations." (*Economy of the Animal Kingdom*, vol. ii. p. 184.) This is the normal condition of complete sleep. When man does not dream in sleep, he is said to be in this condition: and when he does, this condition is said to be relaxed. This we consider is a just view of the subject. And although dreaming may sometimes take place when we are partially conscious of it, which is when we are between sleeping and waking; and when, consequently, there is a partial return to the physical action of the body in our waking state; yet all dreaming is attended by a certain deviation from that physical action; and for the most part, when men are unconscious of exercising any voluntary or intellectual powers. In certain diseases, men are liable to dreams of a different character from those which are experienced during ordinary health. The state of the digestive organs has also something to do with the nature of our dreams. (See Macnish on the *Philosophy of Sleep*, chap. vi. p. 68.) So likewise has the course of thinking (for thinking induces certain changes in the forms of the cerebral matter) to which we have subjected ourselves through the day.* The

* Locke observes, "the dreams of sleeping men, as I take it, are all made up of the waking man's ideas, though for the most part oddly put together." Book ii. chap. i. sec. 17. This is sometimes the case, but it is not the

application of cold in the way of draughts upon the face, and the action of warmth by means of a bottle of hot water to the feet, have been known to be attended with dreams having some apparent relation to these circumstances.* All this certainly shows that the condition of man's natural organism is in some way connected with his dreams; and there can be no well-founded doubt, that if man were morally and spiritually in order, that his physical structure would participate in that advantage, and consequently, that his dreams would be more gratifying and satisfactory.† It is reasonable to conclude, that the bodily constitution of the Adamic people, during the periods of their integrity, was that of the highest health. Disease and other irregularities of the system were introduced by the Fall; thereby vice, by which health is undermined, and ignorance, which transgresses its laws, came into existence; and as man's degeneracy proceeded, their malignity increased. Now as it cannot be denied that dreams have been coeval with the human race, it is equally reasonable to conclude that they were of a delightful character in primitive times; that they were less so immediately after the Fall; still less so in the Noetic periods; and that subsequently they became fantastic, which is now their usual character.

In all this we recognize, that the state of the cerebral substances is, and always has been, in some way connected with man's dreams. But in what way? Certainly not as a producing cause, but rather as a recipient vessel through which the phenomena of dreams are to be impressed for indication in the world.‡ The brain must be made conformable to this end by

general experience of men. Instances of dreams are constantly occurring which have never entered into our waking thoughts. Moreover, by whom, or by what, are they oddly put together?

* See Lord Brougham's *Discourse of Natural Theology*, p. 112, and Du-gald Stewart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. Such cases, however, are by no means general, or even common.

† "In health, when we dream, our visions are generally of a pleasing character. In disease, especially of the brain, liver, and stomach, dreams are both common and of a very distressing kind."—Macnish on the *Philosophy of Sleep*, p. 70.

‡ We think that the Phrenologists, following, and in some measure refining upon, the statements of Dr. Gall on this subject, are right in the main. They teach, that dreaming is experienced during partial slumber, in which certain portions of the brain have lost more of their sensorial powers than others; and that any lucid and all incongruous dreams take place in consequence of the organs, or set of organs which may be awake, and the condition of their activity at the time. This may be illustrated by a stringed musical instrument, which being without strings in some parts, and out of tune in others, cannot give out harmonious music, though struck with the most skilful hand, and yet under some circumstances it may be made to send forth a few agreeable notes. Mesmerism, in all probability, consists

the action of some living force, and therefore, it can only be regarded as a sort of ultimate in the series of preceding causes. Mind is the primary actor upon the human forms; and although those forms may modify its manifestations, they can never produce it. In a state of wakefulness, man, by willing and thinking, is continually arranging the forms of his cerebral organs into a kind of correspondence with his affections and thoughts; just as much so as in giving them utterance, he is constantly disposing the organs of his voice into the necessary forms. But in sleep, he does not voluntarily think or will, and yet he becomes the subject in whom innumerable events are enacted, and in which he also, for the most part, appears to be eminently concerned. Now whence come these things? To say that they are the sports of fancy during sleep, or that imagination being unbridled, is then indulging in her extravagance, may serve the designs of a poet, but they do not answer the purposes of philosophy. Nor is the attempt to explain them upon physical grounds, or the mechanism of matter, more satisfactory; for how evident is it, that mere organized matter can no more produce them than it can originate itself. *That* organization sprang from life; it is designed to be the recipient of it; and it continues to be in association with it, so long as the mechanism remains undestroyed; and therefore, it is absurd to suppose that dreams arise out of its mechanical activity: nevertheless, we think it purely rational to conclude, that peculiar states of that mechanism become, as it were, the plane for their occurrence. As before observed, color is not in the object seen, but in the *light*, which we do not see; yet it requires a definite suitability of surface to collect the beams and display the hue. So is it with the mental phenomena under consideration. Visions and dreams are not produced by man's brains, but by his spiritual associates: nevertheless, it requires a peculiar conformation of the cerebral substances, in order that visions should be experienced or dreams transpire. This view of the case solves the materialist's difficulties, without adopting his conclusions, and also those of the spiritualist, without agreeing to his usual disregard of all physical suitability. It recognizes what is true in the observations of both, but regards the phenomena of each to be distinct things — as distinct as a Jewel is from its appropriate setting.

It is admitted that spirits do attend man during his lifetime in the world. They are not to be regarded as occasional visitors,

in nothing more than inducing by passes, or other means, which professors adopt, a certain physical condition of the brain, and so disposing it for the reception from another origin, of those suggestions and phenomena which its history assures us have been witnessed.

but as common guests; and consequently, are present when he sleeps, as well as when he is awake. We cannot reasonably admit the one and deny the other. What then is the purpose of their presence during sleep? It cannot be an idle one; some objects have to be effected by it; and what, among others that may be named, is so consistent with their nature as that of exciting man's mental faculties. Hence in sleep, they stir up things which exist in the memory, and obtrude others, and in consequence of some of the ultimate organs of the mind being in a state of activity, and others more or less slumberous or asleep, these things become as it were a crude jumble of objects and events. In thus accounting for the generality of dreams, we do not overlook the part which is sustained in them by the soul of the dreamer. It is by the "spirit in man" that spirits can be present with him: the former receives its impressions from the latter, and so long as it acts in nature by means of a physical organism, it can only indicate those impressions in the world as there is a suitability of organism for the purpose. The organization of the mind in such cases is active only in some of its parts, and hence are occasioned those incongruous scenes by which dreams are, for the most part, distinguished. It seems plain, that that, which in dreams is obtruded upon the soul of man, is not produced by itself. The objects by which it is sometimes pursued and distressed, and from which it makes the strongest efforts to escape, cannot be entirely of its own creation. How frequently do men awake in a state of alarm, and feel a sort of gladness at discovering that the cause of it had no natural reality. That which causes terror or pleasure in our sleep can hardly be supposed to have been produced by the same being as that which was terrified or pleased. The soul knows nothing of their origination, it is distinct from them, and is only conscious of its own being, actions, and sensations, and knows nothing of the body being asleep. The persons, scenes, and circumstances which are beheld in dreams, are all extraneous to itself, and as they are not, and cannot be the creations of matter, the only alternative is that they must be presented or incited by spirits apart from itself.*

* The following is an interesting argument on this point. "The appearances offered to the soul in dreams, all idle, trifling, incoherent, and absurd as they are, must either be the work of separate living agents, or the immediate effect of the God of nature. This may surprise: yet there is no medium. For *first*, chance can do nothing in God's world. And *secondly*, whatever is performed by mechanism is done with design; since matter can neither move itself, nor alter its direction, nor effect the least variation from the end proposed. *Thirdly*, no mechanism is spontaneous, or the work of the soul itself. *Fourthly*, God is the sole mover in all mechanical motions, especially in the animal body. Therefore whatever possible way dreams

It is no objection to this view of the case, that men occasionally dream at night of that which has, in some measure, been the subject of their thoughts by day. Chrysostom, who greatly studied the epistles of Paul, might easily dream of his master; (Notice by Sir Thomas Brown, in his *Remarks on Dreams*;) Brutus, who had assassinated Cæsar, of his "evil genius:" (Plutarch's *Life of Brutus*;) the lawyer, who had been anxiously examining a difficult case, of delivering a luminous opinion; (related by Dr. Abercrombie; *Intellectual Powers*, pp. 303-305;) the poet, who had been reading a romance, of writing stanzas respecting it; (see Coleridge's account of the fragment called *Kubla Khan*;) the mathematician who had been studying geometry, of resolving his problems;* the lover, of his mistress; the miser, of being robbed, and the thief, of being captured. In all such cases the mind becomes particularized by the speciality of its waking thoughts. All its parts are not engaged upon them with equal intensity: and spiritual influences agreeing with those thoughts are attracted by them, and brought into association with the person; for as it has been said, man thinks by an influx from the spiritual world; thereby those parts of the mind which have been so engaged are kept in a state of wakefulness, after the others, which have not been so much excited, become collapsed in sleep. And hence those dreams which have relation to the waking thoughts. These considerations need not be extended. We see from them that dreams, like visions, are from a spiritual origin, with which the condition of man's cerebral organism has something to do in order to their indication in the world of nature.

There can be no doubt that men, during the periods of their moral perfection, possessed a corresponding physical organism; and as it is certain that they enjoyed visions of spiritual things, why may they not have experienced dreams respecting them? We think such privileges were consequent on a retention of the order in which they were originally created: and although it is evident, that a departure from that order has been attended by a general cessation of visions; also by the production of fantastic dreaming, together with a derangement of the cerebral structure; yet, as the Scriptures assure us that particular visions

are produced, if the agency of separate spirits be refused, we must ascribe them to the immediate power of the Deity." — Andrew Baxter's *Essay on the Phenomena of Dreaming*, p. 236.

* La Mothe le Vayer writes thus: "Carden affirms in his *Treatise on the Immortality of the Soul*, that he owes many geometrical demonstrations to the reasonings of his mind while he slept; for that when he was composing the books of his new geometry, he accomplished, when sleeping, what he could not have dared promise from himself when awake." — Sheppard on *Dreams*, p. 36.

and dreams of spiritual things have been granted for the special purposes of Providence, we see no reason why, when the spirits of the parties selected for that purpose were raised into a spiritual state, their bodies might not have been brought into a corresponding condition. We see no necessity for separating the two ideas: that which was possible in the one case, could not have been impossible in the other. That which really did take place in the one case, must, we think, have as certainly taken place in the other. As spiritual sight with man, when in order, was attended with physical congruity, it seems to us that the temporary granting of the one must have been attended with the transient restoration of the other. Some change from the normal condition is proved to have taken place in the case of visions, by the instances referred to: and it is well known that dreams are attended by similar results.

The Scriptures clearly represent the enjoyment of certain classes of dreams and visions, not only as a privilege, but as a blessing. They of course distinguish between those which are wise, and those which are not so — that is between those which are derived from good and orderly sources, and those which are engendered by an opposite influence. Hence we read of “vain” and “false” visions; (Jeremiah xiv. 14; Ezekiel xiii. 2, 4;) of prophets speaking a vision of their own heart; (Jeremiah xxiii. 16;) and those of which they should be ashamed; (Zechariah xiii. 4;) and also of the condemnation of dreams, by which the people may be led “to go after other gods.” (Deut. xiii. 1-3.) Still there were visions and dreams good in their origin and true in their purpose. The enjoyment of these was a privilege and a blessing; where there are no such visions, the people perish; (Proverbs xxix. 18;) and it was a calamity to Saul that the Lord did not answer him by dreams. (1 Sam. xxviii. 6.) Moreover, they are to be among the excellences of genuine Christianity, for the Lord said, “It shall come to pass that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: — and your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.” (Joel ii. 28.) Whatever other general signification this promise may have, the occurrence of particular experiences of these things may be consistently expected. Indeed, the application of the passage by the apostle Peter, to the events of Pentecost, recognizes this fact. And although it had a partial fulfilment at that period, it also declares that such events will take place in superior times of the Church, and be among the signs of that superiority. We need not however, dwell upon this expectancy. The Scriptures inform us, that sights of many things in the spiritual world have been granted to certain individuals. These, for the most part, have been seen by men in vision, when their body

was awake; and although there are instances, in which similar things have been seen by the spirit of man when his body was asleep, yet some of the dreams which are recorded, consisted of significative images, excited in the mind by man's spiritual associates, rather than actual exhibitions of spiritual phenomena. And here we notice the distinction between dreams and visions. Both indeed were significative; but the things signified by visions were realities existing in the spiritual world, and those of dreams were appearances induced upon the mind by spirits, for the purpose of representing spiritual things. Hence, visions were the *perception* of Revelation, and dreams the *reception* of it.

Among the ancients, there were interpreters of dreams by profession. They were publicly recognized in Egypt and Babylon. Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar consulted them without success; and hence the services of Joseph and Daniel were obtained. This profession could not have come into existence irrespective of any truth. However fraudulent and false the oneirocritics (the art or science of interpreting dreams) might have become, their *origin* must, we think, have been influenced by some right principle. The circumstance that dreams were admissive of interpretation, and that the interpretations given were realized in subsequent events, prove that they were permitted for premonitory purposes. But upon what principle were these interpretations conducted? Warburton very justly observes that the parties engaged in this business "must have had materials proper for their trade, which could not be the wild workings of each man's fancy;—they would naturally fly to some confessed authority to support their pretended science. But what ground of authority could this be, if not the mysterious learning of symbolical characters? Here we seem to have got a solution to the difficulty." (*Divine Legation of Moses*, vol. iii. p. 191.) Certainly! There can be no doubt that the interpretation of dreams took its rise from a knowledge of representations and significatives.

Still it may be asked, whether visions and dreams are sufficiently substantial things on which to rest our faith in matters so important as religion? Is our belief in a future existence,—another world inhabited by the spirits of departed men, characterized by all such things as are necessary to exercise their genius and satisfy their loves, founded merely upon phenomena, which we can understand but so obscurely? May they not have been hallucinations or mistakes? How are the great mass of mankind to be satisfied that they who are said to have enjoyed such remarkable privileges, were not deceived? As they are not, like much else contained in the Scriptures, admissive of histori-

cal corroboration, is there not room for hesitation, and the exercise of doubt? (Many of the dreams were proved to be true, by historical events.) Many other inquiries on these subjects might be urged; nor can there be any well-founded objection to investigate, with reason and scrupulousness, any subjects said to be spiritual. But the inquiries which have been suggested open out the whole question of the Divine authority of Revelation: this, as Christians, we regard to have been settled. We take the Scriptures to be, what they profess to be, namely, the Word of God; if this profession is a reality, that fact will afford a sufficient reply to every objection, which may be raised by any loose and vulgar ideas of visions and dreams. As, however, there is a distinction between them, we will consider each by itself.

Visions, being among the Peculiarities of the Word, are pre-eminently Revelations; and the only means by which the realities of another state can be brought within the experience of men during their lifetime, in the world. They not only make such existences known, but they also show that man has been created with a capacity for beholding them. God has not only *told* men that there is another world, but he has given to some *ocular* demonstration of its existence. On this subject there has not only been made a Revelation to the *ear*, but also to the *eye*: and the philosophy of Christianity will afford a rational explanation concerning both the manner and the matter of these facts.

The experience of a vision implies two things. *First*, that there is a spiritual world, the objects of which are not to be seen with the natural eyes of men; and *second*, that man is endowed with spiritual capabilities of looking into that world during his residence below. It is evident that these capabilities belong to the soul; and that as such, they are possessed by universal man. It is equally obvious that the soul, in order to see, to feel, and to converse, with spiritual beings, is not a fleeting vapor, nor an aerial phantom; not the breath of the lungs nor the pulsation of the heart, but a spiritual man in the human form. This soul, then, requires the existence of a spiritual world as its appropriate dwelling-place. The natural body has its world, and is subject to its laws; the spiritual body must have its world and be subject to its laws. As there are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, there must be a world for each. The Scriptures not only treat of the soul of man, but they also speak of a spiritual world with distinctness and precision. In many cases there are given elaborate descriptions of objects which have appeared therein: of which some passages in the prophets, and the book of the Apocalypse, are remarkable examples. If there were no such world, there would have been

little for Revelation to have disclosed. That world is not separated from us by distance of space: it is near to, and some of its inhabitants are in continual action upon us. This is plain from many evidences. The Lord, in treating of this subject, said, "the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xvii. 21.) The experiences of men before referred to, respecting the thoughts which are frequently introduced to the minds without our effort, and which are sometimes of a gratifying, and at others of an alarming character, also, prove the nearness of the spiritual world, and although every man is not now permitted to behold its presence, there are but few who have not occasionally felt its influence. The circumstance that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him," (Psalm xxxiv. 7,) shows that His residence cannot be remote. So also does the statement that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth;" (Luke xv. 10;) and none of those to whom the privilege of seeing into it has been granted, give any intimation of its being far away; the eyes of their spirit were opened and they saw! The spiritual world is as close to the soul as the natural world is to the body. We do not see and touch it with our outer senses, because it is an inner state. On the testimony of the Scriptures, which contain the evidences of those who have been permitted to see into the spiritual world, we learn that it is not an empty space, but that it has within it all those substantial realities which are in agreement with the diversified states of its inhabitants. Mankind are too apt to look upon that world as a place of phantoms, and hence their sensuality is shocked when they are told, as the visions of the prophets do tell them, that all in the other life is real and substantial. As God is a reality, so are all the things in the spiritual world in which He is more immediately present. The inhabitants, their pursuits, their means of intelligence, and sources of enjoyment are all real. If they are not so, they are neither worthy of our hopes nor deserving of our fears. Why should we hope for that which is not real, or fear a shadow? Extract from faith a belief in the realities of the spiritual world, and you take from it all that is valuable to virtue or terrible to vice. The spiritual world however, is a very general term, including Heaven, as the happy residence of the wise and good; Hell, as the miserable habitation of the perverse and wicked; and the world of spirits, as an intermediate abode, and the first common receptacle of all who depart this life, and through which all must pass in their progress towards their final destiny.

Respecting these three departments of the spiritual world, we shall speak more at large in future chapters of this work: it is here sufficient for our purpose to observe, that as each is distinct,

the objects which exist in each are in strict correspondence with the equality of its inhabitants: they are in fact, the results of that quality. This is the law according to which spiritual things exist in the spiritual world: this law is, to some extent, active with men below. The ignorant and wicked by their vices surround themselves with the objects of misery and distress; the wise and virtuous, by their industry and diligence, produce for themselves objects of happiness and pleasure. Vice and virtue, ignorance and wisdom are, even in this life, continually creating things to represent them. Broad lands, elegant mansions, decorated apartments, and dignified conduct are instantly perceived to be the symbols of extensive riches, cultivated tastes, and elevated sentiments; whereas filthy homes, scanty furniture and ragged clothing, are not only the plain representations of poverty and want, but not unfrequently of moral disorder and wickedness. The active tendency of the soul is to produce whatsoever is in correspondence with itself; and although these efforts are not always successful below, because there are natural hinderances, yet they are preëminently so above, where these impediments are removed. There the living state of every one becomes the means for creating around him such things as are in agreement with itself, and thus a representation of itself: so that as the states are various, both among the good and wise, as well as among the wicked and depraved, there must be an indefinite variety of existences in each department of the spiritual world, and all of them peculiarly and powerfully expressive of the condition of those whom they surround.

The world of spirits, then, which first receives man on his departure hence, must be distinguished by existences which are in correspondence with the, as yet, mixed character of its inhabitants. The best of men, at the time of their departure hence, are not entirely separated from every infirmity; nor are the worst of men completely cut off from every good. Each class carry into that world their whole character; but it is the predominating love and ruling sentiments which fix and determine their final destiny; but before they can enter upon it, every opposing principle will be removed. The good cannot take with them their infirmities to heaven; nor can the wicked pass off to hell, so long as any regard for goodness is retained by them. The world of spirits is the scene where the winnowing and separation is effected; and this it is which constitutes the judgment. The human spirit passing into that world with its mixed condition, and there, being subjected to the exploration of all its real interior thoughts, affections, and delights, must, upon the principle of each surrounding itself with objects representative of its character, give occasion for the presentation of extraordinary appear-

ances of which we can form no adequate conception in this condition of our being. And here we penetrate the secret causes of those remarkable objects which the prophets and others were permitted to behold in vision.

It will be useful to cite a few instances. Ezekiel says, that he was carried in the spirit of the Lord and set down in the midst of a valley which was full of dry bones ; that he saw sinews, flesh and skin come upon them, and that breath came into them and they lived. (Ezekiel xxxvii. 1-8, 10.) Daniel says, "I saw in my vision four great beasts come up from the sea," which are subsequently described : and in the same state he beheld a ram with two horns, one higher than the other, pushing westward, and northward, and southward ; and a he goat which came from the west without touching the ground, having a notable horn between his eyes. (Daniel vii. 2-12 ; viii. 2-5.) It was in vision, that Zechariah saw a man riding upon a red horse among the myrtle trees, and behind him red horses, speckled and white : also a woman sitting in the midst of an ephah, and two other women who had wings like a stork. (Zec. i. 8 ; v. 7, 9.) The servant of Elisha had his eyes opened, and the young man beheld the mountain full of horses and chariots round about his master. (2 Kings vi. 17.) Peter in a vision, saw a vessel descend, knit at the four corners, in which were four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things and fowls of the air. (Acts xi. 5, 6.) John saw unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon ; a beast with seven heads and ten horns, like unto a leopard with the feet of a bear, and mouth of a lion ; also a scarlet-colored beast full of the names of blasphemy, and a woman drunk with the blood of the saints. (Rev. xvi. 13 ; xiii. 2, 3 ; xvii. 3, 6.) A great variety of other cases might be adduced ; indeed the Apocalypse is full of examples. Now every one sees, that these appearances are very extraordinary ; and that many of them are inordinate combinations. They are such as do not belong to heaven, because there, all is beauty ; nor are they stated as the phenomena of hell. It seems plain then, that they must have existed in the intermediate world, and also, that they must have arisen from those extraordinary conditions of the human character, which result from the unnatural combination of the false and the true, and the good and the evil ; and consequently, that they were types of the spiritual states of the departed, prior to their judgment ; and thus, before they entered upon their final destiny. And is not this a reasonable view of the case ? What extraordinary ideas frequently rush into the mind ! what peculiar affections sometimes take possession of the feelings ! what a clashing of sentiments and an opposition of loves do men occasionally experience !

and who does not perceive that if those states were exhibited in outward things by means of their appropriate symbols, they would be very extraordinary appearances? Now that which presents itself to us as reasonable, if it could occur below, actually does occur in the other life; it being there the universal law, that every state is productive of things representative of itself; by these means all that had been covered is revealed; — all that had been hid is made known.

It is, perhaps, important to remark, that a large proportion of the visions which are related in the Scriptures, consisted of scenery belonging to this intermediate department of the spiritual world: that its remarkable character is solely referable to the mixed character of its inhabitants, and that a sight of it was permitted in order to reveal the peculiar condition of the Church with men.* The visions which have been granted of Heaven and Hell are by no means numerous; those which are related, show that the appearances in the former are magnificent and glorious, because it is the residence of just men made perfect; while the appearances spoken of as existing in hell, are hideous and revolting, because they are in correspondence with the moral abominations of its inhabitants. From these considerations it is abundantly evident, that the spiritual world is not an empty one, but that it has within it an immense variety of well-defined and positive existences.

But why do we not see them? Why does the blind man not behold the things of nature? Because some physical disease has wrought an injury upon his eyes: and the reason why men do not now perceive the objects of the spiritual world, is because some moral distemper has impaired their powers of spiritual sight. The sensualities of thought and life, which have been cultivated and indulged for ages, have produced states which are inimical to our seeing into the spiritual world, and so rendered it difficult, unless the Lord should permit it under particular circumstances, and for special ends. The sight of the spiritual eyes has been impaired by the grossness of the natural man. Humanity, in its primitive loveliness and innocency, held converse with God himself. God talked with Adam. But the Fall drew a veil before the spiritual world; it produced a cataract upon the spiritual eyes, which became more and more opaque until the fulness of transgression made it completely dark. It is very common to suppose that angels, who have been seen by

* As man's character is formed by his reception or non-reception of the teachings of the Church, during his lifetime in the world, and as he carries with him his whole character into the other life, it is plain that such character, as it is there exhibited, is, when seen by men below, a revelation of the state of the Church with men.

men, assumed a natural body for the purpose of presenting themselves to the natural eyes of men. But this was not the case. As spiritual beings they were always distinguished by spiritual bodies, and they have always been seen by the eyes of man's spirit. Their bodies were no more material than was the other scenery which was beheld in the spiritual world. No Christian can doubt, that if the eyes of his spirit were now to be opened, he would be enabled to behold the objects of the otherwise invisible kingdom. But in order that the eyes of the spirit may be opened, it is requisite that the sensualities of the body should be abated. This appears to have been the case with all the Divine visions of the prophets; for they all describe themselves on such occasions to have been in the spirit, and thereby in a state of greater or less insensibility as to the body.

One of the purposes of those visions was to make a revelation of the existence of the spiritual world to sensual men; — to awaken in them a belief in its existence and reality. As a spiritual world existed, and men had lost sight of it, there do not appear to have been left any other means for making the disclosure. God has not only told us that there is such a world, but he has permitted certain individuals to see into it; and preserved in all men certain avenues therefrom, through which its presence may be indicated. Are there any other conceivable means of arriving at the knowledge of such a fact? From these considerations we learn that there is a spiritual world, distinguished by the presence of all such things as are coincident with the interior life and sentiments of its inhabitants. We see that that world is not a mere abstraction, but a real and positive existence; it is not an imagination of the mind, but a reality with which it is in connection; it is not a fancy, but a fact — not a fiction of ecclesiastical politicians, but a reality from God. We learn also, that that world is not far off. Many indeed, profess to believe in its existence, so long as they are persuaded that its situation is remote — perhaps beyond the sun or the stars — but their faith falters, when they are told that it is near at hand, which the Lord did, when He said, "behold the kingdom of God is within you." Men regard it as a place which they may some day visit, but overlook the great fact that it may be inspected now, which the visions of the prophets sufficiently attest. The spiritual world substantiated, is an object of the true faith of a Christian; it is among the ultimate things of his hopes, — the realization of his theory; and although to see it is not the common privilege of men below, yet it has been seen by some of them — seen by the spiritual eyes of the human soul, which have been opened in them for the purpose, by the special providence of God.

It is however to be observed, that other objects of the spiritual

world, rather than its inhabitants, have, for the most part, been presented to the visions of men. No one who attentively peruses the narratives, can fail to be struck with this circumstance. It is very conspicuous in the visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, and John. The ground of this is the law of spiritual existences before adverted to. Those appearances result from the condition of those who dwell there. They are those things by which the spiritual states of its inhabitants surround themselves, and by which their conditions are indicated. They are correspondences which the interior life of spirits reveals: and it is so revealed because they afford a Revelation in the surest way, and in the shortest compass: in the surest way because the symbols are produced by the minds of the spirits themselves; and in the shortest compass, because a symbol, fully understood, would be a volume verbally expressed. Objects convey through the eye, in an instant, a multitude of ideas which could not be communicated through the ear, by any description, however carefully conducted.

But the visions which have been granted of the spiritual world have varied in definiteness and intensity, according to the degree of the spiritual sight which has been opened in the beholder. There are different degrees of perfection in the spiritual sight, and there are more and more interior things in the spiritual world to be seen. This also corresponds with what is known of natural sight and natural things. Every one is aware, that natural sight differs in the state of its perfection, and likewise, that there are multitudes of objects which it cannot see at all, without the assistance of artificial appliances. It is then reasonable to conclude that the sight, by which man might see clearly the objects of the world of spirits, would see but dimly those of Heaven, and still more so its inmost things. To behold these in greater clearness, a more interior opening of the spiritual sight has to be effected. There can be no doubt that visions differ according to the states of those by whom they are experienced. The sight which was opened in Moses to behold the Lord, was of a more interior kind than that which was opened in Aaron and the congregation of Israel to see the fire and the cloud; for the latter as well as the former was a vision. Heaven is a more interior state than the world of spirits; and as the apostle has spoken of a third heaven, it follows, that to behold the objects which distinguish the highest, requires the opening of a more interior degree of the spiritual sight than that which is necessary to see the things which exist in the second, or first, or the world of spirits. As there is a Heaven of Heavens, so there is a sight of sights to behold its inmost magnificence and glory. That which exists in the highest Heaven is declared to

be unspeakable, not so, however, those things which exist in the lower departments of the invisible world, as we find that some descriptions of them have been given. The holiest things require the highest vision to behold them, while inferior objects have been seen by a lower sight. This idea of visions being more or less interior, is plainly taught by the Scriptures, which speak of visions in the night, visions of the head, visions on the bed, and visions in dreams, which certainly denote that the spiritual objects seen under these varying circumstances, were by means of a spiritual sight differing in the state of its spiritual opening and intensity.

It is a common notion, that when we pass into the other life, every thing there will be at once laid open to our inspection. But there is no ground for such a supposition in the Scriptures: and certainly all analogy is against it. Our entrance into the next world, it is reasonable to suppose, will be, in some respects, not entirely unlike our entrance into this. Here we are born into a specific locality and surrounded by peculiar friends, and the condition of our knowledge and our virtue depends very largely upon the educational influences which are brought to bear upon us. There are, however, multitudes of objects of great interest and admiration which we have never seen. Our circumstances, dispositions, and habits of life, have raised the hinderances. So with regard to the other life. By the death of our body, our souls are at once liberated into the spiritual world, where they must have their spiritual locality and particular associations; but the state of our life there is fixed forever, by the nature of the preparations which have been made for it in this. If then, we are not prepared for admission into the highest heaven, is it not plain that we cannot see the things which there exist; nay, is it not evident that our spiritual sight of spiritual things will not extend beyond those objects, which we have qualified ourselves to behold during our residence below? We shall then, *ordinarily*, see only those which are in conformity with our lives. If others at any time are seen, it must be by special grant for peculiar ends; for where the tree falls, there it lies. *Here* we make ourselves acquainted with the subjects in which we delight; we feel indifference about knowing any thing of those we do not love; and as a consequence, we remain in ignorance concerning them. It must be similar in respect to our knowledge of things in the other life, we shall know *there* but little of those things we do not love. We shall turn our eyes upon that which interests our affections; we shall inspect and examine that which is in conformity with our delights, and we shall see understandingly but little of that which is not in agreement with our affections; while all that is

in contrast with these delights will be remote, and if seen at all, will be seen only as in a vision. And we see not why inferior spirits may not sometimes be favored with visions of things superior to those by which they are ordinarily surrounded. At all events, in their common states they can, judging from analogies taken from our experience here, see and know only those things in the other life, for the sight and enjoyment of which they have qualified themselves in this. And what a practical bearing has this truth upon the formation of character? If in our probation we attain only to inferior states, the sight of all superior things in the other life must be closed against us. So long as we are in an inferior condition, the summit of the mountain of holiness will appear to be wrapped in clouds, notwithstanding those who are at the top will behold its purest glory. If then we are emulous of beholding the inmost things of the eternal world, we must qualify ourselves by diligently aiming at the inmost things of knowledge during our existence here. We must desire those inmost things. Nothing will be withheld from a deep, anxious, and active love. Love has conquered innumerable difficulties in the pursuit of knowledge here; and love will remove the obstacles to its attainment there. No heavenly knowledge is too high for the acquisition of a pure and ardent love; and doubtless, the presence of this affection was the groundwork of those visions which were experienced by the primeval race. How far it entered into the character of those to whom they were granted in the Israelitish times, is not recorded; that it did so to some extent it is reasonable to suppose. Surely the prophets were not selected at random, and irrespective of all mental qualifications for their office. A peculiar love for spiritual things must have been with them an influential principle, and have contributed to procure for them those privileges which they were permitted to enjoy.

But not only did they experience visions when in a state of wakefulness, but also during sleep. As dreaming is one of the circumstances which distinguish humanity in sleep,* why may not Divine communication be made to men through its instrumentality? The phenomenon proves to us the activity of the human soul, and shows to us, that it is not in the power of sleep to deaden or abate it. It also affords an evidence of the living capabilities of the soul, when not retarded by the waking sensi-

* There is however no doubt, that brutes are capable of dreaming. The dog is frequently observed to bark and start up suddenly in his sleep, which cannot well be accounted for on any other supposition. As they live by an influx of life from the spiritual world, entering into their brain, why should they not experience dreams according to their instincts, from the same source?

bilities of the body. To have intercourse with the spiritual world it is not necessary that the body should be awake. Its sensualities must in some way be rendered quiescent, and sleep is the most ordinary and natural way for effecting this. Thus spiritual sights have been presented to men in specific dreams. It may be asked, how men knew that what they saw and heard under such circumstances was from a spiritual origin? Our answer is, that all dreams are insinuated by spirits of some sort, and modified in some way by the state of man's mental and natural organism. The proper question to be asked on this point is, how men could distinguish between dreams of an ordinary or fantastic character, and those which were of Divine origin? How they made this distinction we are not informed; nevertheless it is evident that they did so: and we think it highly probable that the ground of it was this — namely, that all those dreams which are mentioned in the Word, were much more vivid than those which were commonly experienced, and that they left upon the minds of their subjects impressions of unusual force, and that they afterwards received an internal dictate from the Lord respecting their Divine origin and spiritual use. This seems to be particularly implied in the case of Jacob, who, on awaking from the dream in which he had beheld the ladder, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it, and the Lord standing above it, said, "surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not. And he was afraid and said, how dreadful is this place! this is none other but the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven." (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13, 16, 17.) Another illustration of the same idea is afforded in the case of Daniel, who had several remarkable visions in a dream, concerning which it is written, "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near to one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made me know the interpretation of the things." (Dan. vii. 15, 16.) In several of those visions, the Lord, or His Angel, is stated to have appeared.* This being an occurrence by no means commonly dreamed about, was well calculated to excite the attention of the beholder, when awake, and so to prepare him for the reception of an interior dictate from the Lord respecting the reality of what he saw or heard. It is also to be observed, that there is a peculiarity in the structure of the narrations which record those circumstances.

* "God came to Abimelech in a dream by night." (Gen. xx. 3.) "The Angel of the Lord spake unto Jacob in a dream." (Gen. xxxi. 11.) "God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night." (Gen. xxxi. 24.) "The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night." (1 Kings iii. 5.) "The Angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a Dream." (Matt. i. 20.)

It is not said that the parties dreamed that they had seen God or the Angel of the Lord, but that God or the Angel of the Lord appeared to them in a dream; which two sentences convey to our minds very distinct ideas. A dream of seeing God might not have had any other existence than that of an impression induced upon the mind by some attendant spirit. It is to prevent this conclusion, and to convey to us the information of a real occurrence, that the circumstance is otherwise related. Infidelity has pretended that the miraculous origin which Christianity claims for Jesus Christ, is merely founded on a dream.* To support this pretension it is said that the Angel of the Lord appearing unto Joseph in a dream, simply means that he dreamed he had seen an Angel of the Lord. Now this is not the meaning of the statement. A positive fact is declared to have taken place in the dream, and not that he merely dreamed it. Thus he actually saw the angel with the vision of his spiritual eyes, and heard his message in a dream, so that Mary's condition was proclaimed to him by an actual message from heaven. This is the fact which the narrative describes; and it was a thorough conviction of its truth on the part of Joseph, which allayed his fears and gave him satisfaction, neither of which could have been accomplished by the mere *dream* of such a circumstance. The same may be said of the Magi, concerning whom it is written, that "being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way:" (Matt. ii. 12:) thus, they did not simply dream that God had warned them; but God had actually done so, when they were in a specific state; they obeyed the dictate and so accomplished the purpose for which it was intended. These events were parts of the general system of Revelation which God has been pleased to vouchsafe: from a very early period, He had given men reason to expect their occurrence, for He said to Aaron and Miriam, "if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." (Num. xii. 6.) It is also written, "in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." (Job. xxxiii. 15-17.) The above cases were visions seen by the eyes of the spirit when the body was asleep. Nor is there any ground for supposing that they were less real than those which were experienced in the waking state. It is true that they are said to have been presented in a dream; the reason of this is to indicate

* This is one of the objections brought against Christianity by Thomas Paine.

the obscure state of the Church respecting spiritual things at the time of their occurrence. The two circumstances are combined to represent the light shining in the darkness ; the light however, did not lose any of its reality because the darkness may not have comprehended it. The objects presented in the vision were real, though the sight by which they were beheld, was somewhat dim. A man is no less a man, because he is seen only in shade or twilight.

There are however, several instances recorded, in which the above distinctions are not made, and in which a dream is simply related as such. This is the case with the dreams of Joseph, (Gen. xxxvii. 5-9,) of the butler and the baker, (Gen. xl. 5,) of Pharaoh, (Gen. xli. 17-24,) of the Midianitish soldier, (Judges vii. 13,) of Nebuchadnezzar, (Dan. ii. 1, 31-36,) and some others. Nevertheless these dreams were of Divine ordination. This is proven by their prophetic character. They were premonitions of events which afterwards transpired ; and therefore, they must have been provided by Him, to whom alone futurity is known. They came to the prophets and others by an influx from heaven ; and for the most part they consisted of vivid impressions wrought upon the mind during sleep by those angelic spirits who were then attendant upon them. Still the origin of the idea so impressed is traceable to the existence of corresponding scenery in the spiritual world. It was from this that the angelic spirits had first gathered the idea. Those objects were there raised up for the purposes of representing, and so giving indication of events which were about to transpire in the world below. Causes are all spiritual, and therefore the events which take place with men, have their causes in the spiritual world. Causes exist prior to effects, and therefore, if any one were made acquainted with the nature of causes, and then permitted to see into the spiritual world, he, doubtless, would learn from the indications there, something of the circumstances which were about to be manifested here. The state of appearances in the spiritual world may be considered as continual predictions of events which are about to transpire with men ; the reason is because the state of those appearances in the spiritual world actually arises from the will, thought, and intentions of men's spirits. The impressions then which were insinuated in dreams, like the sights which were beheld in visions, equally arose out of existing phenomena in the spiritual world, though the one was presented to the spiritual sight of the beholder when he was awake, and the other insinuated into man's thoughts by spiritual associates when his corporeal part was asleep.

The images presented to the mind in the Divinely provided dreams, like the objects which were beheld in spiritual visions,

were representative and significative ; and thence Revelations — Revelations of things pertaining to mind, as must be evident from all that has been said. Every one at once perceives that visions were Revelations ; but still the precise instruction they were intended to convey is not so readily acquired. The visions were not merely Revelations of the objects that were seen, but those objects were the representations of spiritual ideas, which it is important for the man of the Church to learn. The same may be said of dreams : and in this respect they both partake of the same general feature, *i. e.*, the narratives relating them contain an internal sense, which distinguishes all that is truly a Revelation from God. Still the peculiar phenomena, and spiritual knowledge which have been communicated through these media, are such as could not have been so well, or so satisfactorily disclosed by any other. Whatsoever God does for the human race, He always does in the best possible way ; and therefore, the visions and dreams recorded in the Word, besides being peculiarities in themselves, announce by peculiar imagery certain facts for the edification of the Church. We will close this chapter by briefly considering two examples illustrative of those points.

FIRST : from among the visions, we select the Transfiguration of the Lord. That event is thus related. — “After six days, Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them ; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light : and behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him.”* Here we are informed that Jesus was seen by three of His disciples, under an aspect different from that in which He appeared to them in their ordinary states. What they saw of Him with their natural eyes was His material humanity, suited to the conditions of the external world ; but what they saw of Him in this vision with their spiritual eyes, was a glorified humanity adapted to the conditions of the internal world. These humanities were two entirely different and distinct things, each suited to its respective abode ; for by the one, He was in Heaven, by the other, He was in the

* Matt. xvii. 1-3. The scene of this transaction is said to have been a high mountain, but the locality of it is not determined. Some have thought that it was Mount Tabor, but as that is fifty miles from Cæsarea Philippi where Jesus last taught, that opinion is now rejected, and mount Hermon is advocated by some, though objected to by others. “Nothing” says the Rev. James D. Butler, “forbids us to imagine that it was that exceeding high mountain where the devil showed our Savior the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them in a moment of time ;” but what natural mountain was that ? These things were written without regard to geographical precision, because the design of the statement was rather to indicate spiritual states than physical locality.

world. Hence Jesus said, He came down from Heaven, and was in Heaven at the same time that He was in the world. (John iii. 13.) We learn still further that Moses and Elias, who for some centuries had been dead, as to their natural bodies, were nevertheless alive as to their spirits, and in the possession of spiritual bodies, having the form and individuality of men. These remarkable incidents assure us of the Divine human personality of the Lord; and, also, of the the spiritual human personality of men in the other life. As historical facts belonging to that world, they demonstrate the reality of certain existences by which it is distinguished; but besides this they were intended to convey to us another spiritual lesson.

It is said to have taken place "after six days,"* because that period is representative of the preparation, which is requisite for perceiving the ideas it was intended to reveal. Days in the Scriptures are significant of states; and six days denote so many successive states of spiritual progress, in which knowledge, faith, charity, and life, are developed. The six days of creation represented the progressive development of regenerate life, which is spiritual creation, and the seventh day is declared to be holy, because the succeeding state is sanctified by the presence of purity and peace. It is commanded that we are to labor six days and do all that we have to do; because this spiritually signifies the moral, intellectual and spiritual work which has to be attended to, in order to secure that rest of which the Sabbath is significant.

The vision was granted to Peter, James, and John, because these were among the most ardent followers of the Lord, and a competent number of witnesses; (Deut. xix. 15; Matt. xviii. 16;) but more particularly because they represented the three essential graces of genuine Christianity, which are Faith, Charity, and the Works of Charity. These three graces are intended for the reception of the whole man. *Faith*, being for the understanding; *Charity*, for the will; and the *Works of Charity*, for the life. Either of these without the other would be imperfect.

* Luke, in relating this illustrious scene, states that it "came to pass about eight days after," ix. 28. This evangelist seems to have included the day reckoned from, and also the day of the transaction, whereas Matthew speaks only of the six intermediate days. Matthew is precise as to the days; Luke is not so: he states that it was *about* that time. There is, however, another reason for this apparent discrepancy; this is founded in the circumstance that Matthew relates the events of the Lord's life as it is perceived by minds chiefly under the influence of truth, and in which labor and combat are more particularly experienced; whereas, Luke treats of those events as they are perceived by minds principally under the influence of love, and in which conjunction with the Lord is effected. The number *six* has reference to the labors of truth, and *eight* to the enjoyment of good.

Thus faith without charity would be cold ; charity without faith would be blind ; and charity and faith together, if not reduced to act, would be principles without activity. It is the combination of these excellences which constitutes the truly Christian character : and no one can intellectually behold the Lord in His glorified character, but those who have become principled in these graces. They qualify men for ascending into a high mountain apart : for by that mountain is signified an elevated state of the interiors ; and it is said to be *apart*, to represent its separation from all worldly influences. The transfiguration of the Lord is the change which takes place in His appearance, when he is viewed from this state and elevation. So long as the disciples were in a natural condition, and beheld the Lord by the light of the world only, He appeared to them as an ordinary man ; but when they were raised out of their common state, and gifted with the capability of spiritual vision, they saw the Lord in a light afforded by the illumination of his own kingdom, and thereby His aspect was entirely changed. In the former state, He appeared as a Man of Sorrows, but in the latter, He was seen as a Man of Glory.

These two aspects, under which the Lord appeared to His disciples, have had their counterpart in the Christian's experience of subsequent times. Regeneration prepares and conducts men to an intellectual eminence ; it opens their mental eyes, and enables them to see deeply into the spiritual and holy things of religion. As faith, charity, and the works of charity, become incorporated into their character, the Lord Himself is perceived under a more glorious aspect. Thus He is transfigured, when men are transformed by the renewing of their minds. Being raised from a natural into a spiritual state, they see the Lord in a purer light : in a natural state, He is seen in an humanity that is infirm ; but in a spiritual state, He is beheld in an humanity that is glorious. And His face is said to have shone as the sun, and His raiment to have been white as the light, because the shining of His face denoted the brightness of His Divine love, and the whiteness of His garment, the lucidity of His Divine truth. These characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ are spoken of throughout the whole Word ; and it was to inform us of this fact that it is further said, " Behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him : " for by Moses was represented the historical portions of the Word, and by Elias was represented the prophetical ;* and they are described to have been talking with Him, to inform us of the communication which

* " Moses and Elias must certainly be allowed to be very natural and proper representations of the Law and the Prophets." — Rev. J. Hewlett, B. D. *Annotations on Matt. xvii. 2.*

the Word has with the Lord, and of the revelations which it makes concerning Him. This vision then, gives us some plain information respecting the actual personality of the Supreme Being: it likewise shows that merely natural men do not see the Lord in the light of His own kingdom; and also, that this perception can be enjoyed only so far as the Christian graces are possessed. The interior sense of this vision is therefore evident. It is a sense of great value in the treasury of spiritual knowledge; and one which no other means were so capable of conveying to the world.

We next come to the example of a dream. There is, however, a peculiarity to be noticed in reference to some of those which are mentioned in the Word. Besides their spiritual imagery and internal signification, they had a fulfilment in certain natural events. This is remarkably the case with two of Joseph's: in one he dreamed that he and his brethren were binding sheaves in the field, and lo! his sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and behold, their sheaves stood round about and made obeisance unto his sheaf: and in another, he dreamed that the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to him. (Gen. xxxvii. 5-9.) Both of these dreams had a prophetic reference to certain events which afterwards took place with Joseph, his brethren, and father in Egypt. This is well known. (See Gen. xlii, and the following chapters.) But these things were not all, which those dreams were intended to point out; their meaning does not end with the historical events in which they received an external fulfilment. They had an internal signification,* and are predictive of certain conditions of spiritual life pertaining to the man of the Church. The same may be said of those historical occurrences in which they were fulfilled; they likewise point to some living realities which are constantly occurring in the life of religious men. The reason for this, and how it is that the historicals of the Word are revelations, will be shown in a subsequent chapter. That which here concerns us is the meaning of the dreams cited above.

Doubtless the images presented in these dreams were, under the Divine Guidance, induced by angelic spirits; and it is most evident that they were intended as the types of something relating to the future condition of the Church. For although they proximately referred to the exaltation of Joseph in Egypt, and the humiliation of his relations before him, they are also predictions respecting the Lord, and the obedience which will be rendered Him. In the Scriptures, to dream, considered in itself,

* "In ancient times, in all nations, every thing was made an emblem or a representation of some spiritual or moral subject." — Dr. A. Clarke, *Com. Gen.* xli. 42.

means to receive revelations; and the things dreamed were symbols of the things revealed. That this is the case with the two dreams of Joseph is evident from the series of things narrated: together, as we shall presently see, they contain a summary representation of those circumstances which had been foreseen concerning the state and exaltation of Divine truth within the Church.

By Joseph is represented they who are principled in goodness, and consequently, the Lord, from whom all goodness comes. Thus, in the first dream above referred to, he represented the Christian, who derives his name from Christ, and in the second he represented Christ Himself, *i. e.*, the Lord as to His humanity.* That by Joseph was prefigured the Lord Jesus Christ, is an idea which has long prevailed in the Church. The history of Joseph is so remarkably divided between his humiliation and exaltation, that we cannot easily avoid seeing in it something relating to the Lord during his manifestation in the world, who was at first humiliated and afterwards glorified, so as to evince, in various respects, the typical character which Joseph sustained. Who does not see that the Lord being betrayed and sold to the Pharisees by Judas as one of His disciples, answers, in a most remarkable manner, to the circumstances of Joseph having been betrayed, and sold to the Ishmaelites by his brethren? And also, that while his trials and degradation aptly symbolize the Lord's conflicts and temptation; so his being raised into eminence as the chief Lord of Egypt, was a type of the glorification of Jesus, being regarded as the Great Lord of all. These facts are too plain to be received merely as curious and accidental coincidences. Doubtless the one series were selected and arranged by the Divine Providence for the purpose of being a significant type of the other. The blessing which Moses delivered concerning Joseph, remarkably illustrates and confirms this view. "Of Joseph he said, blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of Heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious

* "Joseph was a type of Christ — God prepared the way for the coming of His Son, by a variety of things in which the great principles of His undertaking were prefigured, and so rendered familiar to the minds of men; and he pursued the same object by a variety of persons, in whom the life and character of Christ were in some degree previously manifest." — Rev. A. Fuller, in the *Commentary of Henry and Scott*. "By those things which are related concerning Joseph, from beginning to end, are represented in its order, the glorification of the Lord's humanity, consequently, in an inferior sense, the regeneration of man, for this is an image or type of the Lord's glorification." — A. C. 5827.

things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth, and the fulness thereof; and for the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth; and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh." (Deut. xxxiii. 13-17.) These things were not intended to be understood of Joseph; the predictions never received any fulfilment in reference to him as a man in the world; nor is it probable that they will ever receive such an accomplishment. They are wholly applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom those things can alone be justly predicable; and of whom consequently, Joseph was a type; and because he was a type of the Lord, he was also a type of the Christian, who is so, only by what he derives from the Lord.

Now, if in the first of Joseph's dreams we view him as a type of the Christian; and in the second, as a type of Christ, we shall then find both dreams to be eminently instructive, and that each communicates a specific lesson respecting the Lord. We will endeavor briefly to point this out.

By Joseph dreaming is denoted the man of the Church receiving spiritual instruction, the nature of which is signified by the things of which he dreamed. By sheaves in the field are represented the doctrines of truth in the Church. A field represents the Church, because as from a field are grown those things which are requisite for the maintenance of natural life, so, from the Church are provided those which are essential for the sustenance of spiritual life; hence it is, that a field is so frequently mentioned in the Word in a figurative sense. "A fruitful field" and a "joyful field" denote the spiritual luxuriance and enjoyments of the Church. Sheaves in the field, then, represent the collected doctrines of the Church, because as the sheaves contain the reaped corn for man's physical use, so they are the emblems of those doctrines of truth which contain the "corn of heaven" for man's spiritual use. It is in consequence of this signification that it is written, "he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him;" (Psalm cxxvi. 6;) where, to go forth and weep, denotes deliverance from evils by means of repentance; to bear precious seed, is to receive the Divine teachings; to come again with rejoicing, is the resuscitation of happiness; and to bring his *sheaves* with him, is to possess the doctrines of truth.

By Joseph's sheaf, then, is represented the true Christian doctrine respecting the Lord, namely, that He is one with the

Father, and consequently, that God is a Divine Human Personage. He is here signified by a sheaf upon the same principle that He is elsewhere called "the vine;" (John xv. 1;) but He is called a vine in reference to the *truth*, and He is signified by a sheaf, in reference to the *good*, of His Divine Humanity. That this is the signification of Joseph's sheaf, follows from the circumstance that it arose and stood upright, and all the others made obeisance to it. It is said to have *arisen and stood upright*, to denote that this doctrine is the supreme principle of the Church's regard; its rising has reference to its elevation in the thought; and its uprightness to the firmness with which it is established in the affections. And all the other sheaves are described to have *stood about* and made obeisance to it, to signify that every other doctrine of the Church must take its character from this, and be submissive to it. Every one sees that this is according to right order. All the doctrines of a genuine Church must bend before this which annunciates the Lord; the acknowledgment of Him is the first duty; and every other doctrine teaches us to worship and obey Him. Thus Joseph's sheaf stands upright, and the other sheaves stand round about and make obeisance.

This view of the first dream is further enforced by the second, in which Joseph said, "Behold the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me."* Here the obedience is made to Joseph himself, because in the supreme sense he was the representative of the Lord, as before observed. By the *sun* is signified love; by the *moon*, faith; and by the *stars*, knowledges respecting these things. These significations could be proved by numerous quotations from the Word but a single instance must suffice. The Lord, when treating of the consummation of the first Christian age, said, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from Heaven:" (John xiv. 6:) here, it is evident, that by the darkness of the sun is meant the obscuration of love, by the moon not giving her light, is signified the cessation of enlightened *faith*, and by the falling of the stars from Heaven is represented the prostration of spiritual *knowledges*. Consequently, by the sun, moon, and stars making obeisance unto Joseph, was denoted that love, faith, and knowledge will, at some period, be wholly directed to the acknowledgment of the Deity, and consequent worship of the Lord Jesus Christ as the true God and eternal life. These

* Jacob said of this dream "shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee;" Gen. xxxvii. 10. Although their bowing down did afterwards take place with Jacob and his sons, yet it had no reference to Joseph's mother. Rachel had died some years before, in giving birth to Benjamin. Gen. xxxv. 18.

are desiderata to be evolved in the progress of genuine Christianity. Hence the Lord taught, "If a man love Me, he will keep my words." (John xiv. 23.) "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." (John xi. 26.) "I am the truth." (John xiv. 6.) "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 32.) The images then presented in those dreams were excited in the mind of Joseph by angelic spirits, and they were, under the Divine Providence, selected to form a portion of the materials of the Word, because they were prefigurations, and so contained Revelations, respecting a most important epoch in the development of enlightened Christianity.

CHAPTER IX.

MIRACLES : — THEIR OCCASION AND DESIGN.

ARGUMENT. — Miracles for the most part occurred as they are related. Two kinds of miracles. The definition of a miracle. Divine miracles indicate Omnipotence displayed on a limited scale. The production and sustenance of nature, a miracle. Why not commonly so regarded. The miracles of God, works of Divine order, required when men were in a disorderly state. Omnipotence not an attribute for arbitrary action; but guided, in all its doings, by the laws of order. Illustrations. A definition of what order is. Miracles sometimes referred to as proofs that Omnipotence interferes with the laws of order to bring about some new result. Refutation of this idea. Divine miracles the results of specific laws for their production. Illustrations. That they refer to the removal of some evil, or to the building up of some blessing in the minds of men. Magical miracles had an opposite tendency.

Miracles have commonly been performed when society was low in intellect and morals. Proven by the Scripture history of men at those two epochs, when the two principal groups of miracles were performed. Inquiry answered respecting the effects which the Mosaic miracles produced on the Jews and Egyptians. Miracles force a temporary confession respecting some extraordinary power, but they do not inform the judgment. Arguments and illustrations. The miracles by which the introduction of Christianity was accompanied commonly regarded as proving the truth of its doctrines. Difficulties attending this view of the case. Miracles do not confirm the truth of a statement. They do not always prove from whence the power for performing them is derived. They may be wrought for other purposes than for those of truth and love. False Christs might perform them, and the magicians of Egypt have done so. The sources of their power to do those wonders inquired into. Shown to be from demoniacal influences. Those who performed miracles might have known whence their power was derived, and yet not have been capable of explaining the process.

The effects which the miracles of Christ produced upon the beholder, not those of a permanent belief respecting Him. Instances and arguments in proof of this. Instances in which the Lord's miracles were considered unfavorable indications of His character. Instances in which a belief in Him preceded the performance of miracles, and was a requisite condition for

their performance. Paul's miraculous conversion considered. Miracles could not have been designed for the production of belief in Christianity. No necessary connection between a miracle and truth. Divine truths have been delivered to the world without the attestation of miracles. The unfitness of miracles to procure the conversion of their spectators, stated in the Scriptures. If intended for such a purpose, why have they been discontinued when conversions have yet to be effected. Miracles interfere with the freedom of human thought.

Reasons why miracles were performed. 1. They awakened the attention to the acknowledgment of a spiritual power, when it was not recognized in the ordinary phenomena. 2. They compelled a peculiar class of men to act in a certain way, that the history of their conduct might afford materials for constructing the Word. 3. They were performed that they might be the vehicles of an internal sense, having reference to the spiritual states of men. 4. Because a peculiar condition had been induced upon the spiritual world, which it had become requisite to remove. The change to be effected in men by the influence of religion, could be best represented by miraculous phenomena.

Illustrations of the preceding arguments. The burning bush. The raising of the dead son of the widow. The miraculous power of believers. Some miracles recorded which did not occur according to the precise terms of the letter. The speaking of Balaam's ass, the standing still of the sun and moon, and the retrogression of the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, instances of this kind. These cases examined and explained, both as to their literal and spiritual senses. Conclusion.

AMONG the diversified contents of the Scriptures, the record of miracles holds a distinguished place; and these Peculiarities of the Bible are now to engage our attention. The miracles mentioned in the Scriptures, for the most part, took place agreeably to the narratives which record them. No portions of the Word have been more frequently assailed on the one hand, nor more successfully defended on the other, than those in which they are described. They were not private exhibitions, but public phenomena; the whole current of Israelitish history, from the time of Moses, took its rise and received a character from miraculous occurrences. The reality of the Christian miracles is proven by the publicity of their performance. The shrewd and searching objections of the sceptic have been met by the sound argument and learning of the believer, so that the realities of such events are as well, and as fully attested as any other historical occurrence.* No one who has made himself fairly acquainted with the literature which has been produced upon this subject, can entertain any reasonable doubts respecting their reality. This, then, is a question on which we need not enter. Our object is more particularly to inquire into the

* See Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, Spinoza, and Paine; Leslie, Douglas, Campbell, Paley, Chambers, &c., on the *Evidences of Christianity*. Also Mr. Babbage's ninth *Bridgewater Treatise*, in which Mr. Hume's objections to the occurrence of miracles is replied to on the established doctrine of probabilities.

circumstances which occasioned them, and the design of their execution.

Now the Scriptures speak of two kinds of miracles: *Divine* and *Magical*. These latter are such as were performed by the Magicians of Egypt; and others which are described as proceeding from the "spirits of devils." (Rev. xvi. 14.) Their existence has its historic evidence, and the Biblical relations of them are to be received as facts, concerning which we shall make the requisite observations as we proceed. Our first attention shall be directed to those, which are described *to have been brought about by the immediate interposition of God*; and this is our definition of a Divine Miracle.* We do not admit that it consists, as it is popularly said to do, of a deviation from the ordinary course of nature, or in any temporary interference with some of its uniform laws. Our reasons will presently appear.

The first idea which occurs to us on the contemplation of a miracle is the power of its performer: God's miracles are therefore practical enunciations of His omnipotence; still displayed only on a limited scale; because all the miracles related in the Word, when put together, do not exhibit an extent of the Divine power equal to that which is presented, to enlightened minds, in the creation and preservation of the universe. The productions of physical nature, and the sustenance of those causes by which its operations are perpetuated, are miracles exhibitiv of power upon a gigantic scale. These things are not commonly placed in the category of miracles, because their duration has rendered them familiar, and afforded opportunities for investigating their

* Some difficulty has been experienced in the definition of a miracle, and therefore various explanations of it have been given. Some have said that it is "what exceeds the power of nature;" but to this it is replied, "that we know not the utmost power of nature, and consequently cannot tell what exceeds it." Leslie's *Truth of Christianity Demonstrated*. Others say, a miracle is an "alteration of the laws of nature;" but surely new effects are not produced by the altered activity of old laws; if so, what specific laws were altered when any particular miracle was performed? As the laws cannot be pointed out, their alteration cannot be shown. Hume, in his *Philosophical Essays concerning the Human Understanding*, says, "A miracle may be accurately defined, a transgression of the laws of nature by a particular volition of the Deity, or by the interposition of some invisible agent." Dr. Campbell, in his *Dissertation on Miracles*, objects to this explanation, on the ground that *transgression* invariably denotes "a criminal opposition to authority," and suggests that the word *suspension* would make the definition more intelligible. But when the blind man had his sight restored, the physical cause which had occasioned his blindness was not simply *suspended* but actually *removed*. Miracles then do not consist in the suspension of the laws of nature, but in the removal of those causes which have interrupted their orderly activity; and this, in the case of Divine miracles, has been effected by the benevolent interposition of God. Magical miracles we define to be the wicked interposition of infernal agency.

causes ; so that men may become acquainted, in some measure, with the laws of their existence. But they are not the less miraculous on that account. They originated out of God's fiat, and they are maintained by His omnipotence. And this is precisely what must be asserted of those Divine miracles which are recorded in His Word. Creation is a perpetual evidence of the Divine existence, and of the immensity of God's power. The Divine miracles mentioned in the Word, may be considered as temporary creations, exhibiting the presence and hand of God. Doubtless they were accomplished by some adequate laws ; and if such phenomena were of frequent occurrence, so as to present the opportunity for investigating their character, men would, to some extent, become acquainted with them ; but surely this would not deprive them of their miraculous character. If so, a miracle is a miracle only so long as we are ignorant of its cause : and it ceases to be so, in proportion as we become acquainted with it. But who does not see that a miracle is such, independently of our ignorance, or of our knowledge, of the laws of its production ?

As just observed, the phenomena visible in nature are not commonly spoken of as miraculous, because they are familiar to us ; nevertheless they are so, notwithstanding our astonishment at them may have ceased. Look at a fact or two. God created the earth, and imparted to it certain laws of motion, by which it is enabled to travel annually round a centre in space, at the rate of more than a million and a half of miles a day ; * a velocity inconceivable to mind, and imperceptible to sensation. Is not this a miracle ? Again. God has created and established the laws whereby vegetable life may gather, from the invisible atmosphere, a large proportion of the solid materials which constitute the bulk of the vegetable existences ; † and by means of

* The mean distance of the earth from the sun, according to Arago, is 94½ millions of miles ; this makes the circumference of its orbit about 605 millions, which being divided by 365, shows a result of 1,657,534.29.

† A willow tree weighing five pounds was planted in two hundred weight of dried soil, which was afterwards moistened with water, as occasion seemed to require. The tree was then permitted to grow for five years ; at the end of that time, it was taken out and found to have gained 160 pounds, exclusive of the weight of leaves which had fallen every autumn. The soil was again dried and weighed and found to have lost only about two ounces. Hence it became evident that the soil could not have supplied the matter which the tree had gained. Was it then obtained from the water ? This does not admit of so conclusive an experiment as that adverted to. It is known that plants, in a few months, evaporate a much greater weight of water than themselves ; and it is also known that a much heavier quantity is supplied than what they appropriate ; now water is composed of oxygen and hydrogen, and about one half of a plant is made up of these two elements, and therefore it may be supposed that the water has supplied them.

other agencies, He arranges them into a multitude of forms, and produces all their magnificence of color, and diversity of fragrance; from the same prolific source, He provides for the physical organism of man and beasts. Surely these are miracles, because nothing but the omnipotence of God could have produced them. It is true, that in a few cases we know something of the intermediate laws of causation, and occasionally are enabled to watch the processes by which the effects are accomplished; but this does not deprive them of their miraculous character, since every process which we observe and know, is as much the offspring of the Divine hand, as any miracle recorded in the Word; the process for producing which, men have not had the opportunity to observe and know.

It is admitted, upon all hands, that the miracles of nature are brought about by the activity of some laws of Divine ordination. The same principle must be conceded in reference to the miracles recorded in the Scriptures. All that is known of God's works assures us that He is a God of Order; and it is clear that every thing He has done, or ever may do, will be regulated by this essential constituent of His Being. The Divine miracles then, were acts of some laws of the Divine order, brought into operation in consequence of the peculiar condition and circumstances of men at the period in which they transpired. They were the unfoldings of new powers, in which the omnipotence of God might be brought home to the personal recognition of the people, who had nearly ceased to make any acknowledgment of God, and who, consequently, cared not to elude any information respecting His attributes, from the ordinary phenomena presented to them. The miracles then, were orderly acts of God's power, displayed in times when men were in remarkable disorder.

The Omnipotence of God is not, as it is sometimes supposed to be, like the power of a worldly monarch, whose acts are not regulated by laws, but influenced by circumstances and caprice. It has no resemblance to such a power. God always operates

Nevertheless, as oxygen is abundant in the atmosphere, and as it is so essential to the existence of the plant, it cannot be concluded with certainty, that the water supplies to it any other substances than the hydrogen. Consequently as 1000 parts of water consist of 889 of oxygen, and 111 of hydrogen; a plant which weighs two thousand pounds, can only have derived 111 parts of half its weight from water, the other half being carbon. Thus we learn that the soil supplies a plant which is 2000 lbs in weight, with only about two pounds of matter, and the water with little more than a tenth part of half its weight, so that the supply to such a plant from the soil and water together is only about 113 lb, leaving 1887 lb to be accounted for as derived from the atmosphere. — See Griffiths on the *Chemistry of the Seasons*.

according to laws — laws framed by His own infinite wisdom — and every display of His Omnipotence, whether it be contemplated in the phenomena of the universe, or in the revealments of His Word, demonstrates the fact. Try to conceive the idea of God doing something without a law, and then endeavor to express it. The effort will be fruitless: it cannot be accomplished, because it is the same thing as supposing God to do something without wisdom; which would then be folly.

Look at creation. Does not the existence and motion of the planetary bodies exhibit Omnipotence operating according to laws? The same fact distinguishes the power by which the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms are sustained. We cannot refer to a single evidence in nature, in the production of which God has been engaged, without recognizing the impress and activity of some orderly law. Neither can any fact be cited from revelation in which it has been dispensed with. God, at creation, foresaw all things, and therefore, in creation, He must have provided laws through which Omnipotence continues to act under every exigence. Those laws once established, must be adhered to. If any contingency arose in the operations of nature, or in the wants of men, which those laws were inadequate to meet, then the wisdom which framed them must have been deficient. Moreover, if God departed from them, He would forsake His own wisdom. Take away the laws of order from creation and the Church, and both must perish.

It may be asked, what order is. We define it to be that principle of a thing, which arranges all its parts, so that their activity may best promote the end for which it was created. Thus, order is the harmonious action which subsists between means and ends: and the laws of order are those interior influences which secure the preservation of the universe, and promote the happiness of men. The laws of order are as numerous as the things in which they operate. In the vegetable kingdom, the laws which attend the production of wheat are, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." (Mark iv. 28.) The Omnipotence of God does not effect it in any other way. It does not grow grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles; (Matt. vii. 16;) because it would be contrary to the law which He has enacted, for giving to every seed its own body. (1 Cor. xv. 38.) A similar law of order influences the productions of the animal kingdom: nor is man's moral state without it.

The laws of moral order are distinct from those of physical order. If a man lives according to the principles of morality, Omnipotence will save him; * but if this same person violate

* By the morality here spoken of is meant that which is derived from the Divine teachings.

the physical laws of health and safety, Omnipotence does not interfere to rescue. The moral state of the missionary who carries the gospel abroad, is no guaranty for his physical safety during the journey. If, in going to sea, he neglects to embark in a good vessel, he perils his existence. The piety of the Christian will not protect him from disease, if he chooses to reside in a deleterious atmosphere. Omnipotence puts forth its hand to help men in their moral state, when they comply with the laws of moral order; but when they neglect the laws of physical safety, it permits them to suffer the consequence: it does not save contrary to the laws of safety. The eighteen, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, (Luke xiii. 4,) perished, not because they were sinners above all who dwelt at Jerusalem, but because the laws of physical safety had been neglected. The laws through which Omnipotence acts to save the souls of men, are distinct from those through which it operates to protect their bodies.

From these illustrations, it will be easy to gather the general idea intended to be expressed by the sentence, "laws of order." And who does not see, that the greatest power is exercised through their medium. When order is disregarded, power is weakened. There is no security for either natural advantages or spiritual blessings, but in those laws of order, through which Omnipotence bestows them. When Jesus said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate;" (Matthew xxiii. 37, 38;) He revealed to us a law of divine protection. God would have gathered the people, but they would not. Their compliance with His invitation was a law indispensable to their safety: they neglected the law, and hence arose their desolation. God does not act disorderly: He is infinitely good, and infinitely powerful to do good; but then this good can only be done as the laws of wisdom are observed. If this be true, then all His operations are displays of those laws. He does not act arbitrarily even for the removal of evil. Moral evils are to be removed by repentance; the law being, except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish; (Luke xiii. 3, 5;) and physical evils are to be abated by applying physical remedies; the law in this case being, that the sick need a physician. (Matthew ix. 12.)

Jesus said, with God all things are possible; (Matthew xix. 26;) that is, with Him, all things are possible, which are consistent with His character and laws. That the word "possible" ought to be so construed is evident from another passage, in which

Jesus declares that all things are possible to him that believeth; (Mark ix. 23;) that is, with the believer, all things are possible which are consistent with the requirements of a true faith. It is not possible for God to lie; (Hebrews vi. 18;) the strength of Israel will not repent; (1 Samuel xv. 29;) He cannot do what he does not will to do. He is not like a person who can at once play the part of a shepherd and the wolf towards a flock. It is orthodox, indeed, to believe that it is "poor Omnipotence" which "cannot change an ox, or a stone into a rational philosopher, or a child of Abraham; a man or a worm into an angel of Heaven."* It so happens, however, that they who so believe, have no evidence for such a faith. When has God done such things, and where in His Word, has He informed us that He would do so? Such a notion belongs to the mythology of the Gentiles, and not to the teachings of the Bible. The Greeks said that Deucalion and Pyrrha threw stones behind them, which started into men; that Apollo transformed Daphne into a laurel; that Diana turned a huntsman into a stag; and that another of their gods changed the virgins of Parnassus into magpies. These mythologies agree precisely with the notion of changing "oxen or stones into rational philosophers." If then, the former ideas are absurd, how can the latter be shielded from such a charge? The idea that Omnipotence is guided by no law, induces us to ask, why then, it did not prevent the serpent from infesting Eden; Cain, from slaying his brother; Solomon, from committing idolatry; David, from numbering the people; and Judah and Israel, from the profanation into which they so frequently fell? The notion charges these things on God: it supposes that He had the orderly power of prevention, and would not use it! but the fact is, that to have prevented them would have been to interfere with those laws of moral freedom, which He had established as being essential to human existence and responsibility.

God accompanied creation with laws which were the very best for the purposes which infinite wisdom could devise, and

* Rev. John Wesley, A. M. See letter to the Rev. Mr. Law, in *Wesley's Works*, p. 356. A portion of the above remarkable sentence was probably written under the recollection of the following statement of John the Baptist, "I say unto you, that God is able of these stones, to raise up children unto Abraham." Luke iii. 8. But surely it cannot be reasonably argued, that by stones are here meant material stones; for even if it were conceded that they could be suddenly converted into men, there would still remain the difficulty of seeing how they could be the children of Abraham. The fact is this, the term *stones* is employed to signify the truths relating to repentance which the Baptist taught. From these *stones* men might be raised by God, because they are among the laws of His Omnipotence, and the men so raised might claim the high spiritual paternity of which Abraham was the representative.

these He does not alter: if He altered them, they would cease to be the best; being the best, no alteration could make them better, and therefore, any change would be a deviation from the best. If God were to do any thing which was not the best possible for Him to do, then He would execute a defective work, and that would be a contradiction to His infinite wisdom. God does not create a defective law, and therefore, He needs not to mend, or patch, or alter any. All that He does is perfect; to presume then, that He will, under any circumstances, alter a perfect law, is to suppose that He may deviate from perfection. Surely God, from the beginning, saw that the laws which He was about to create were the best adapted to promote His purpose of acting beneficently with men. If He did not see this, then He was deficient in foresight; if He did see it, then no contingency could arise, but what was amply provided for. The latter, and not the former, is the true conclusion. "God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold it was very good." (Gen. i. 31.) It is utterly impossible to contemplate nature, or reflect upon the phenomena described in revelation, without seeing that their existence includes the activity of some orderly law. To this it may be added, that "by creation, is signified that which is Divine from innermost principles to outermost, or from first principles to last; for every thing which is from the Divine, commences from Himself, and advances according to order even to the ultimate end, thus, through the heavens even into the world, and there rests as in its ultimates, for the ultimate of Divine order is in the nature of the world: in such an order exists, and in such subsists, every thing which is created in the world; and in such an order also is the man of the Church, who, by truth from the Word, is regenerated of the Lord; hence, the Lord, in the Word, is called Creator, and man, who is regenerate, is said to be created anew. In such an order also is the Word, and because it is of such a quality, it is on that account, said of its wonderful things, that they are created." — *Arcana Coelestia*, 10,634.

Miracles, however, are sometimes referred to as proofs that Omnipotence interferes with the laws of order, and alters them with the view of bringing about some new or extraordinary result. But this presents itself to our mind as an evident mistake, as every effect in nature is the result of a law peculiar to itself. The miracles, so far as they were effects in nature, must have originated in laws peculiar to themselves; the Divine power acting through them in every case. The planets revolve, shrubs grow, animals live, and man exists, but each according to their own respective laws. The laws which result in the production of an oak, are different from those which conduce to the

existence of a man. God, in guiding the laws which promote vegetation, does not interfere with those which contribute to the existence of humanity. They are distinct productions growing out of the activity of different laws. Every effect in nature comes into being by the operation of its own orderly laws; and so, we think, did the miracles recorded in the Word. It was no more requisite to interfere with the common laws of nature, in order to produce a miracle, than it is necessary to suspend the laws of vegetation in order to produce a man. Miracles, as specific productions, were the result of specific laws, operating in harmony with the designs of infinite beneficence. They may be called new temporary creations, brought about, not by the alteration, or suspension of any of the ordinary laws of nature, but by some other specific laws adequate to their production. Thus, the performance of a miracle is no exception to the fact of God's acting omnipotently through the laws of order.

Every thing is what it is, by means of the order, and consequently of the laws, of its existence. Man is distinguished from the animal, the fowls from the fish, the tree from the stone, by the laws of order which are proper to the being of each. This is a universal truth. To change the laws of existence is the same thing as to change the things themselves. Hence it is plain to see, that every thing depends for its existence upon the laws of order by which it exists — laws which have been prescribed by the infinite understanding of God. Miracles come within this category: they were the results, not of any alteration or suspension of the ordinary laws of nature, but of new or specific laws of order through which Omnipotence performed them. Hence it is, that the Divine miracles contemplated as an end, either the removal of some evil, or the building up of some blessing in the state of man; and the spiritual signification of the histories relating them, shows what those things are. The magical miracles involve an entirely opposite purpose. Both kinds seem alike in externals, but the difference between them is like that of two beautiful women, one of whom is a chaste virgin, the other a common harlot.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that miracles have taken place chiefly in times when society has been exceedingly low, both in intellect and morals. The performance of a miracle may, so far as the testification of history is concerned, be received as an evidence of this fact. Their frequency has diminished as knowledge has advanced, and they have passed away on the arrival of intelligence. The Lord said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign:"* the same condi-

* Matt. xii. 39. "In the Word, in many passages, mention is made of a sign, and of a miracle; and by a sign is meant that which declares, testi-

tion may be predicated of those who seek after a miracle. It has always distinguished the general character of the people before whom they have been exhibited. In the Jewish church, external miracles stood in the place of internal intelligence; on this point it may be useful to make some additional observations.

From the Scriptures we learn, that there have been two particular epochs in which miracles have been performed in remarkable abundance. The *first* was, that which was contemporary with Moses; and the *second*, that which was distinguished by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in the world. Those which are recorded to have taken place in other times are comparatively few: and they are isolated cases.

Now, what was the mental and religious condition of the Israelites in the time of Moses? That generation were bondsmen: they were the descendants of those who had experienced more than a century of oppression from a hard-hearted and cruel government: the result was, that they had grown up in great ignorance respecting all religious things. Tyranny is unfavorable to knowledge; and slavery is a foe to virtue. The people seem to have lost sight of all true ideas respecting God: even the very *name* under which he had been approached by their fathers appears to have been forgotten: for when Moses was raised up for the purpose of promoting their liberation, he inquired of God the name by which He would be announced to them. (Exodus iii. 13.) Their subsequent history in the wilderness, in connection with the golden calf, is a further proof of the degradation into which they had sunk, in reference to the first principles of all religion.

Nor were their Egyptian masters any better. It is well known that they were idolaters of the grossest description, venerating cats and crocodiles, cows and serpents: (See Herodotus *Euterpe*, xxxix to lxxiv :) and the Scriptures represent Pharaoh himself as scornfully inquiring, "who is the Lord that I should obey His voice;" and, also, as emphatically declaring, "I know not the Lord." (Exodus v. 2.) Nothing can be more certain

fies, and persuades, concerning a thing sought for; but by a miracle is meant that which excites, strikes, and occasions amazement: thus, a sign moves the understanding and faith, and the miracle, the will and its affections; for the will and its affections is what is excited, struck, and amazed, and the understanding and its faith is what is persuaded, and to which is applied declaration and testification. That a sign and a miracle differ, may be manifest from this consideration, that the Jews, although they had seen so many miracles wrought by the Lord, still asked signs from Him." "That by a sign is meant testification that they might be persuaded and believe that the Lord was the Messiah, and the Son of God who was to come, is evident; for the miracles which the Lord wrought in abundance, and which they saw, were not signs to them, by reason that miracles are not signs, except with the good." *Apocalypse Explained*, 706.

from history than that both the Israelites and Egyptians, in the time of Moses, were utterly ignorant of the true God, and thereby destitute of all those orderly principles which constitute genuine religion.

That a similar state of spiritual degradation marked the people at the period of the Lord's manifestation in the world is equally evident. The Jews, to whom were committed the oracles of God, (Rom. iii. 2,) and who had thus provided for them the most favorable opportunities for the preservation of religious intelligence and virtue, became at this time an exceedingly abandoned people. The character of the lawyers, scribes, and pharisees, was of the most revolting description. The burdens which they imposed, the hypocrisy which they practised, and the frauds which they perpetrated under the name of religion, were shocking and detestable. This is the testimony of Jesus Christ respecting them; and therefore he pronounced a woe against them. (Matt. xxiii. throughout.) Josephus, their own historian, represents the Jewish nobility of that period to have been exceedingly profligate, and the commonalty to have been similarly wicked. (Consult the closing of his *Antiquities* and *Wars*.) This indeed is evident; they would not otherwise have demanded the liberation of a robber, (John xviii. 40,) and insisted on the crucifixion of Jesus, with the horrid exclamation "His blood be upon us and our children." (Matt. xxvii. 25.)

Now it is in these two periods of Scripture history, when mankind were peculiarly degraded by the prevalence of ignorance and crime, that we find the largest groups of miracles to have been performed. The Israelites in the time of Moses, and the Jews during the manifestation of Jesus, seem to have lost all practical recognition of God's power in the ordinary doings of His providence, and thus occasion was given for directing their attention to its evidence through the performance of miraculous phenomena. But what effects did they produce upon the minds of their beholders? The answer which history affords is, that it was but slight in its nature and transitory in its duration. The miracles, for a short time, struck them with awe, but they did not enlarge their faith, or improve their character. The most favorable impression which they left upon the minds of the people, was some crude acknowledgment of the Divine power, and a fear lest it should be brought to bear unfavorably on themselves. But even these sentiments, as we have said, attained no permanency: indeed, it seems unreasonable to expect, that miracles should produce any other than transitory effects upon their beholders, because they appeal to the *senses* and not to the *understanding* of men. They may force from man a temporary confession of the Divine presence and power, but, because they do not inform his judgment, they cannot change his character.

These principles appear very plainly in the group of miracles which Moses performed in Egypt. Neither the Israelites nor Egyptians derived from them any moral advantages. "Pharaoh hardened his heart and harkened not unto them,"* nor would he let his bondsmen go. It is true, that upon the death of the first born in every house, he was induced to permit their departure, but that miraculous calamity did not impress him with any solemn or permanent sentiments respecting the God of Israel; for within a few days after their departure, he pursued them with a large army, designing to bring them back: and this purpose was prevented only by the interposition of another miracle — the overwhelming of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. Surely if the sight of miracles were intended to induce on men a stronger faith or superior character, the Egyptians beheld a sufficient number for the purpose, and yet we do not read of any such results.

It may be said that they were not intended for the purpose of bringing about the conversion of the Egyptians. This is true: nevertheless they were designed to induce that people to let their bondsmen go. They saw the miracles, and were solemnly informed that they were the interpositions of Jehovah to effect the liberation of the Israelites; and although they were at last alarmed by the calamities which befell them, they do not appear

* Exodus viii. 15. In other places, it is said that the "Lord hardened his heart;" Exodus iv. 21; vii. 3, 13; ix. 12; x. 1, &c.; these, however, describe the circumstance as it appeared to those who ascribe all things to God, evil as well as good; but as evil ought not to be attributed to Him, it is evident that the above passage describes the real state of the case. It is obvious that the Lord would not on the one hand, have caused miracles to be worked to induce Pharaoh to let the people go, and upon the other induce his obstinacy to prevent that result. The inconsistency of such a course is manifest, and therefore it is plain, that Pharaoh's obstinacy is not to be ascribed to God, but to his own selfhood. The writers of the *Universal History* say, "It is plain that the words ought to have been translated, that God *suffered* the heart of Pharaoh to be *hardened*, as all those who are ever so little versed in the *Hebrew* will readily own." B. 1. 7. 2. "The Hebrews, and indeed all the orientalists, often use verbs metonymically with respect to those who are not themselves the authors of any action, but who afford occasion of performing it by not preventing it. See instances of this in *Glassii Philologia Sacra*, lib. i. Tr. iii. can. xxii." "Men in the early ages of the world, judging of things only as they appeared to the senses, paid more attention to the fact, than to the cause which produced it." *Annotation* by Rev. J. Hewlett, B. D. The meaning of this latter clause is, that men judged of things as they appeared, rather than as they really were. Dr. A. Clarke, on the original text *vaiyechezek leb Paroh*, translated, "and He hardened Pharaoh's heart," Exodus vii. 13, says that it should be rendered "and the heart of Pharaoh was hardened," the identical words being so translated in verse 22. And the reasons assigned are, "lest the hardening, which was evidently the effect of his own obstinate shutting of his eyes against the truth, should be attributed to God." — *Commentary*.

to have believed in the Divine origin or the purpose, of the phenomena.

Nor were the Israelites themselves much better in these respects. It might be supposed that the miracles, having been performed for their peculiar advantage, would have produced upon them a permanent acknowledgment of the Divine goodness; and at the same time have led them to a grateful and pious obedience to God's commands. But their history, during those events, shows that no such results transpired. As soon as they had escaped from the Egyptians into the wilderness, they began to murmur against Moses and Aaron who had performed the miracles: (Exodus xvi. 2:) they also accused Moses of a design to destroy them, and seriously entertained the idea of stoning him to death. (Exodus xvii. 3, 4.) Indeed those prodigies made but a slight and transitory impression upon the religious sentiments of Aaron himself, who had been one of the instruments for performing them. He had been but a short time in the wilderness when he made the golden calf, and joining the people in the idolatrous worship of it, said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." (Exodus xxxii. 4.) Thus, the Israelites, who had witnessed so many miracles in Egypt; who had beheld the dividing of the Red Sea for their safety, and had seen Pharaoh and his army overwhelmed therein—they, before whom the pillar of a cloud went by day, and the pillar of fire by night, and for whose sustenance manna was rained from Heaven—they who had seen all these things, were not thereby withheld from idolatry, nor impressed with any enlightened sentiments respecting God.

These facts are educed from the history of the Mosaic miracles: and is it not evident, that those prodigies did not inform the judgment, increase the faith, or improve the character, of the witnesses? The reason is, because all such phenomena are beyond the reach of the human understanding. Men cannot be *instructed* by that which they do not *comprehend*: make the subject *intelligible*, and they may be benefited. Miracles awe the senses and compel a transitory assent to their existence, but even those impressions are found to fade away. Whatsoever acts compulsively upon the mind, cannot enter it: the compulsion only exists a little while upon the surface of men's acknowledgment, and then it is dissipated. The knowledges which constitute faith, can only pass into the mind by means of reason; and faith takes root only as these are received in freedom.

Now the conclusions to which we have arrived, respecting the effects produced on those who beheld the group of Mosaic miracles, have a counterpart in that other group, which was performed by the Lord Jesus Christ, during His presence in the

world. Connected with this there are some interesting facts and considerations.

The miracles which attended the introduction of Christianity, are commonly regarded as evidences proving the truth of its doctrines.* We do not wish to weaken any argument upon this point, of which it is legitimately admissible; though it must be confessed that it has sometimes been carried beyond defensive bounds; and hence, the demand of a miracle is among the first which is made from one who may profess to have received a message from on high. Although we believe that Christianity could not have been introduced to the world, without the performance of miracles, this does not necessarily imply that they were intended to confirm the truth of the doctrinal statements made by him who performed them. Each miracle, considered in itself, was doubtless intended to show some specific fact connected with the establishment of Christianity; and their existence proves the action of some extraordinary power therein, but as we are told that false prophets might produce them — as the magicians of Egypt did actually work some which bore a close resemblance to those which were performed by Moses, we do not see how they can prove the truth of any thing, apart from the circumstances connected with their own existence. Surely the fact of a man performing a miracle to-day is no guaranty that what he asserts to-morrow is certainly and undeniably true. Nay, it does not even prove the accuracy of a statement that may be delivered during the time of its performance; † because

* Dr. N. Lardner says, "the miracles were done for the confirmation of that excellent doctrine which Christ taught, and that all men might know that the Father had sent Him, and that the Word He taught was not His own, but the Father's." — Vol. xi. p. 14, of his works; subject, *Vindication of Three of our Savior's Miracles*.

† Dr. Cudworth observes on the subject, "that miracles alone are not sufficient confirmation of a true prophet, without consideration of the doctrine taught by him," — "all miracles promiscuously do not immediately prove the existence of a God, nor confirm a prophet, on whatsoever doctrine; though they all of them evince, that there is a rank of invisible understanding beings superior to men, which the atheists commonly deny." — *Intellectual System*, vol. iii. pp. 5, 7. Dr. Sam. Clarke, in his book on the *Existence and Attributes of God*, treats of miracles generally in vol. ii. cap. 19; and he concludes that miracles do not of themselves, possess any efficacy towards proving the truth of any doctrine; and that we must judge from the nature and character of the doctrine, whether the miracles are Divine or otherwise. To this, Dr. I. L. Mosheim, in his notes on Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, objects, by urging that it makes the doctrine prove the nature of the miracle, rather than the miracle prove the truth of the doctrine; but is this a valid objection? Is it not a truth, that the Christian miracles are now believed to have been Divine, because they are associated with such excellent doctrines; surely if the doctrines were otherwise, we could not fail to ascribe them to another source. Dr. S. Johnson, as reported in Boswell's life of him, did not consider miracles a complete proof

there is no necessary relationship between the phenomena and the assertion. The Jews, by Moses; and Christians, by Jesus Christ, were taught to be peculiarly guarded upon this point. The former were told that prophets and dreamers might give a sign and a wonder, and say, "Let us go after other gods which thou hast not known, and let us serve them," but they were not to hearken unto them. (Deuteronomy xiii. 1-3.) And the Lord said, "There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch, that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect;" but He also said, "believe them not." (Matthew xxiv. 24, 26.) The Scriptures therefore assure us, that miracles do not prove the truth of what may be asserted by him who performs them: and it seems plain, that Divine miracles can only be distinguished from those which are not so, by an enlightened consideration of the doctrine with which they are associated.

The magicians of Egypt worked two, if not three miracles by their enchantments, similar to those which Moses and Aaron performed by the power of God. These are cases deserving of attention in this inquiry. "Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent;" and "the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments, for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." (Exodus vii. 10-12.) This latter circumstance simply shows the superiority of Aaron in the contest; but what is there in the fact itself, to prove whence the power was derived? Aaron's rod became a serpent; the magicians' rods became serpents; and although the context intimates that the power by which each was produced, had a different origin; yet what is there in the external aspect of the phenomena, by which an ordinary spectator could pronounce which was of God and which was not? The same may be said of the miracles by which the waters were turned into blood, and the production of frogs,*

of the Christian revelation. Thus, "*Boswell*. Sir, you come near to Hume's argument against miracles—that it is more probable witnesses should lie or be mistaken, than that miracles should happen. *Johnson*. Why sir, Hume taking the proposition simply, is right. But the Christian revelation is not proven by miracles alone.

* Exodus vii. 20, 22; viii. 6, 7. The circumstance of the magicians turning the waters of Egypt into blood, after they had been changed by Aaron, has always been felt as a great difficulty. It is asked, where the magicians procured the water when it was all already changed? It is common to answer this by observing, that at the 24th verse of chap. vii., the Egyptians are described to have "digged round about the river for water to drink," and the water thus procured, it is supposed afforded the means for their enchantments; but although they "digged" for water, there is no statement that they found it, and therefore, this answer does not seem to be

both of which the magicians are described to have imitated. There are no express statements connected with the history of the two latter miracles, which show that those of the magicians were inferior to those of Moses; how then, could those of Moses be considered of Divine origination, and those of the magicians not so? If the main object of the Divine miracles had been to induce a belief in God, how does it happen that the magicians could do the same things with their enchantments, and so nullify their force? May not this difficulty, in some measure, account for Pharaoh's obstinacy? One man shows a miracle to prove, as is supposed, that he came with a message from God; another man shows a miracle of a similar description, without any such profession. Surely then, the miracles of the latter show that the miracles of the former cannot be any proof of the certainty of his profession, — what then is to be done? Why, if the like results can be produced by opposite powers, we must discriminate the good from the bad by the exercise of intellect: and thus, after all, we are compelled to refer the subject, which miracles are supposed to prove, to the discrimination of mind. We may be reminded that the wonders of Moses were most numerous, and that there were many which the magicians could not imitate. But from this circumstance, such a man as Pharaoh, who had been accustomed to see magical performances, would

complete. Another reply is sometimes drawn from the 20th verse, in which the change is stated to have only affected "all the waters that were in the river;" and consequently that as Aaron's miracles did not extend to all the waters of *Egypt*, some were left, on which the magicians might operate. This can hardly be considered to meet the difficulty, especially when the minute statements of the 19th verse are remembered. Another view must be taken of the case. It is to be observed, that although the magicians in reference to this miracle are said to have "done so with their enchantments," it is not added, that they *changed the waters into blood*. In the cases of the serpents and the frogs, it is not only said that they "did in like manner with their enchantments," but it is added, that every man's rod became a serpent, and that they brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt. The statement "and the magicians did so with their enchantments," does not necessarily imply that they were successful; for at the 18th verse of chap. viii. it is so said respecting another attempt in which they failed. Does not the omission then, of that which in three other cases seems to have been requisite to give precision to the narrative, imply a doubt respecting their success; and may not this afford a true solution of the difficulty above referred to? Before quitting this point it may be asked, what is the actual meaning of the term *blood* in the passage before us? It surely cannot mean literal animal blood; if so, how many curious questions may be urged respecting it. We are of opinion that the turning of the water into blood simply means the imparting to the water some malignant quality, which men should loathe, and of which the fish should die. The conspicuous presence of the means of death, is, in the Scriptures, frequently spoken of as the presence of blood; thus, "I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee; sith thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee." Ez. xxxv. 6.

only infer the existence of superior ability. He would simply regard Moses as a magician, exceedingly clever in his art. The sequel shows, that both the king and his people were influenced in their rejection of his message, by some such sentiment as this. It is therefore plain, that such phenomena do not afford that clear and satisfactory evidence, on which the Lord rests the truths which are to constitute the faith of His Church. If they did afford such evidence, He surely would have provided against the difficult contingency of miracles being worked for other purposes, than for those of truth and love. This not only was not done, but the Lord said, "False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect." (Matt. xiii. 22.) We read also, of the "spirits of devils working miracles." (Rev. xvi. 14.) Is not this telling us, that the truths of genuine religion are not to be proven by such kinds of evidence? When we find that magicians have worked miracles, and that false Christs and the spirits of devils may perform them, no reasonable confidence can be placed on such phenomena, either to prove the Divine commission of the performer, or the truth of what he may assert.

It is true, that the magicians acknowledged that those miracles which they could not imitate, contained within them evidence of "the finger of God:" (Exod. viii. 19:) still, it cannot be shown, that either Pharaoh or the generality of his people so regarded them. They were terrified by the phenomena, and finally, were compelled to let the people go; but it is evident that they did not believe the miracles to have come from God. Can we then suppose, that God would have so specially interfered to produce a result which did not happen — that He worked miracles to urge men to believe in Him — at the same time that he must have foreseen that their obstinacy would resist his efforts? The notion of miracles being performed to induce belief, must be given up, or it must be admitted, from these and other instances to which we shall presently advert, that God was unsuccessful in His efforts to produce it!

Much difference of opinion exists as to the source, whence the power of the magicians to perform their miracles, was derived. Some maintain that it was communicated to them from God.* It is not requisite to dwell on the plausibilities by which this opinion is urged. It is nowhere stated in the Scrip-

* Dr. Samuel Shuckford, in his *Sacred and Profane History of the World Connected*, asks, "How came they (the magicians) to succeed in the attempt which they made in opposition to Moses," and this he answers by saying, that "God was pleased in some cases, to give an unexpected success to their endeavors, in order to serve and carry on his own purposes and designs by it." — Vol. ii. pp. 483, 484.

tures; and the whole scope of the narration, in our view of it, goes to ascribe it to another origin. And if this were not the case, with what reason can it be argued, that God would communicate a power to Moses on the one hand, to produce a certain result, and on the other, impart a similar power to another party to be exercised for an opposite purpose? This would be like two wheels acting in contrary directions; or similar to a builder who erects an edifice with one hand, and destroys it with the other.

We admit, indeed, that in a certain sense, all power, like all life, proceeds from God; but as men can pervert the life which they so receive, so likewise, can they abuse the power with which it is associated: now this perversion and abuse are not of God, but of man: and it appears to us, that the magicians performed their miracles by those demoniacal powers which wicked men become in the other life. It was of these that the Apostle spoke when he said, "we wrestle, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, *against powers*, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. vi. 12.) There can be no doubt, that those who have lived wickedly in the world, and preëminently given themselves up to the practice of cunning devices and fraudulent acts, will, in the other life, become diabolical spirits, with peculiar powers. And it is reasonable to suppose, that it was from their association with such spirits, that some men have become sorcerers and capable of enchantment. We are expressly informed that "the signs and lying wonders" of anti-christ would be effected through the power and influence of satan; (Thes. ii. 9;) that is, of wicked spirits, whose evil character has sprung from false persuasions.*

Egypt was among those kingdoms in which there existed some remains of that ancient representative Church, which had been formed by the Divine covenant, established with Noah and his immediate descendants. This circumstance is taught us in the Scriptures; for instance: "Solomon's *wisdom* excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the

* The term devil, as distinguished from satan, denotes those whose false persuasions arise from the activity of evil loves. Peter was called *satan*, (Matt. xvi. 23,) in reference to the false persuasion of his thought; but Judas was called a *devil* in reference to the evil affections of his heart. John vi. 70; xiii. 2. The "evil one," that is the complex of infernal spirits, has many other names in the Scriptures; thus, the serpent, Rev. xii. 9; the tempter, 1 Thess. iii. 5; Abaddon in Hebrew, and Apollyon in Greek, Rev. ix. 11; Angel of the bottomless pit, Rev. ix. 11; Prince of the world, John xii. 31; Prince of Darkness, Eph. vi. 12; Beelzebub, Matt. xii. 24, and several others. The reason of these various names is because every one of them is intended to express, in the abstract, some particular class of evil love or false persuasion, and in the concrete, those spirits who are

wisdom of *Egypt*." (1 Kings iv. 30.) And again, "how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings? Where are they? Where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon *Egypt*. The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of Noph are deceived; they have also *seduced Egypt*." (Isaiah xix. 11-13.) These passages plainly recognize the existence, at some time, of some peculiar wisdom in Egypt, and this evidently took its rise from the representation and signification of the ancient church referred to. The scientifics of that church consisted in the knowledge of the relationship which existed between internal causes and external effects; and those by whom such knowledges were cultivated, were called either the Magi, or the wise. They who were skilled in, and taught the *non-mystic* scientifics were considered as the wise; while they who were skilled in exhibiting the mystic scientifics of the church were called the Magi. These latter, at the Mosaic period, appear to have been acquainted with many things belonging to the spiritual world, together with the relationship which existed between such things, and some others in the natural world. By means of a state, which resulted from this knowledge, many of them had open communication with spirits, and from them were acquired those illusory arts by which magical miracles were performed—performed by abuses of Divine order, and especially by the perversions of correspondences. By these means the Magi could imitate certain Divine miracles, in like manner as wicked men at the present day can counterfeit some of the Divine virtues of Christianity. The bad can pray, speak piously, give alms, perform uses, and do other acts of charity to society at large; and thereby, they so nearly imitate those excellences which are proper only to the good, that a common observer cannot easily distinguish which proceed from the principles of Divine order, and which do not. From this we learn that certain things which are alike in externals, may nevertheless proceed from entirely different origins; and this we believe to have been the case with the miracles of

influenced by them. In general, the context will enable discriminating minds to ascertain the precise meaning of any that may be sought for. It may also be here observed, that as there are various perversions of Divine order in the world, that each in the Scriptures has its appropriate name. Besides the magicians, we read of sorcerers, Ex. vii. 11, the witch, Ex. xxii. 18, the necromancer, Deut. xviii. 11, the prognosticator, Is. xlvii. 13, and some others. Now the *magicians*, are those who make what is *false* appear like *truth*; the *sorcerers* are those who make what is *evil* appear like *good*; *witches* or *wizards*, are those who, from affection, or intellect, seduce men from what is spiritually good; the *necromancers* are those who seduce from what is spiritually true. Prognosticators, soothsayers, astrologers, false prophets, &c., are the names for other varieties of perversions.

Moses, and those of the Magi. The *modus operandi* cannot be explained.* Perhaps neither Moses nor the Magi, had they been interrogated upon this point, could have given any detailed information respecting it. Moses indeed must have known, that he derived the power to do what he did from God; and the Magi might have been aware, that their ability to do similar things was derived to them from their association with spirits; but we do not see that more information than this was absolutely requisite for the purpose contemplated. Professional mesmerizers in the present day induce very extraordinary results, but they cannot explain the causes. They simply know that they have a power to produce certain consequences upon certain subjects; respecting the source of that power they have no absolute knowledge; they show the phenomena, but they cannot narrate the interior processes through which they are effected. Our ignorance therefore, of the *modus operandi* of the Mosaic and magical miracles, does not at all weaken the fact of their having proceeded from different origins. Such knowledge is not necessary, to understand the purpose for which the miracles were performed. This purpose, as we have said, cannot have

* Dr. Mosheim, in his notes to Cudworth, has given the following account of what he conceives to have been the means, by which the magicians were enabled to imitate the miracles performed by Moses. "Their miracles were not such as to subvert the order of nature, or cannot well be performed by a demon. They first of all cause the rods which they cast down to become serpents. There is nothing wonderful in this; for I do not suppose the demons either really changed the rods into serpents, or produced serpents by their own power, or suddenly generated those reptiles from the seed of serpents: on the contrary, I grant that none of these things could be done by the power of a demon. In my opinion certain demons were at hand to assist them, and having suddenly snatched up the rods cast down serpents, of which there were at that time immense numbers in Egypt. They next turn the water into blood, or rather gave it the color of blood. This is a sort of prodigy that might be performed in a certain measure, by those who are skilled in natural science. Thus, after the magicians had struck the water with their rods, one or more demons tinged it with a red color, so that what appeared water before, seemed to the Egyptians to be blood. Thirdly, they fill Egypt with a multitude of frogs. But what difficulty would it be for a demon to collect a number of frogs from the neighboring fens, and distribute them through the houses, villages, and towns. Nor is it necessary that this should have been done instantaneously." — *Intellectual System*, vol. iii. 16. It is curious to observe in these explanations that while the agency of demons is called in to execute the works, they are still supposed to have done nothing more than what a juggler, with the aid of confederates, might have accomplished. The whole is regarded as a piece of mere conjuration — through the conjuration of demons — for according to this, the rods were not changed into serpents, the water was not turned into blood, and frogs were collected from the fens and clandestinely distributed in the haunts of men!!! Canst thou have been the serious interpretation of one who really believed the Bible to have had God for its author?

been to induce an intellectual faith respecting God's interposition and providence, because, howsoever the original spectators might have been favorably affected by those of Moses, the effect must have been considerably weakened by those of the Magi; and also, because we find that the alarm and attention which they occasioned speedily passed away; that the Egyptians actually perished in prosecuting their denial of the idea, that God was in the wonders which had so disastrously affected them; and that the Israelites themselves, though they saw this additional miracle, still continued "a very froward generation, children in whom there was no faith." (Deut. xxxii. 20.)

We now turn our attention to the Christian miracles: the beginning of them was at the marriage of Cana of Galilee, when Jesus turned the water into wine. (John ii. 1-11.) This circumstance does not appear to have produced any very remarkable influence either upon the governor of the feast or his guests; the disciples, indeed, are said to have believed on Him, on that occasion, but *that* they did before; they would not otherwise have been his disciples. They were influenced by the ordinary prejudices and expectations of their countrymen; and doubtless saw many other instances in which the Lord displayed his preternatural power; nevertheless, it is plain that the impressions which those miracles produced upon them, were at once feeble and fluctuating; for we are informed that Peter denied Him, that Judas betrayed Him, and that in the hour of danger they all forsook Him and fled. (Matt. xxvi. 56, 70, and x. 4.) Surely, these circumstances could not have taken place, if miracles had been specially designed to strengthen their faith or improve their virtue. They who had seen so many miracles, and who professed to follow the Lord with so much devotedness and attachment, found that they were not the legitimate sources of moral strength in times of personal danger. And it is remarkable, that the apostles very seldom refer to the Lord's miracles, as grounds of belief, either in their reported discourses or writings; and even when they do so, the allusion is slight and incidental. And how few are they, who at this day, rest their faith in Christianity upon any special remembrance of the miracles, by which its introduction to the world was accomplished! Do not recipients believe its teachings rather in consideration of their moral and instructive excellence? If miracles did not produce belief in the minds of the original spectators, how can it be supposed that that was the effect which the record of them was intended to produce on a distant generation of readers? It is plain that some other view ought to be taken respecting their design. Those evidences of the Lord's Divine

character which the apostles most esteemed, and which really continued with them, were, for the most part, those which arose from a right understanding of His spiritual instructions. It is written, that many believed, because of His own word; (John iv. 41;) and He Himself declared, "he that heareth my Word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life;" (John v. 24;) the reason is because the Divine instructions can enter into man's intellectual comprehension and so remain with Him. Permanent convictions arise out of rational affections and ideas. Miracles present themselves only to the senses of the body, which dies; but reasons are presented for the discrimination of mind; and when received, they continue in that mind when the body is no more. When Thomas was told that the Lord had been seen after his resurrection, he at once declared that he would not believe, unless he should himself behold the fact. Although he had witnessed so many miracles performed by the Lord, they were not sufficient to convince him that the resurrection could occur. He demanded another prodigy: and when the Lord appeared to him, He said, "Thomas, because thou hast *seen* me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have *not* seen, and yet have believed." (John xx. 29.) In this, the Lord lays no particular stress upon the miraculous circumstance of Thomas seeing Him, and thence believing; but He attaches a very high degree of importance to those who should believe *without* so seeing Him: they were to be blessed. Blessing is an internal state of the mind arising from the presence of rational knowledge and spiritual love, which miracles do not give. They strike the senses with amazement, but do not endow the understanding with intelligence. They merely act upon the outer man and raise the idea that the thing is as it is beheld; but they do not satisfy the requirements of the inner man, which asks for the *why* and the *wherefore*. Nothing can enter there that is not introduced by the recommendation of reason. The faith that is permanent lives in the spiritual man, where it is protected by truth and knowledge.

The unsatisfying nature, and the temporary effects produced by miracles upon the minds of their beholders, are shown to us in a great variety of instances. It is an unquestionable fact, that they made but little or no impression upon the generality of the Jews respecting the Divine character or mission of Jesus. If miracles had been designed as the evidence of these things, and if they were adapted to bring conviction to the mind concerning them, how does it happen that so large an amount of such evidence was resisted? The Jews did not believe. It is true, that Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou

art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him;" (John iii. 2;) and yet how feeble was the belief of this very ruler: he made no open profession of believing that Jesus was the Messiah; he went to the Lord by night, and thus preferred, as the means of information, the instruction derivable from rational intercourse, to the amazement induced by miraculous phenomena. The Lord, indeed, occasionally referred His hearers to His works, saying, "though ye believe not me, believe the works:" "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake:" (John x. 38; xiv. 11:) this appeal was made to those who hesitated to receive His Word: it was better that such should believe upon external temporary evidence, than not believe at all, because thereby they might be preserved in a state favorable to the reception of faith at a future time. Divine *works* are useful to arouse the attention of men, when Divine *words* do not penetrate their intellect, but they can never become the foundation of enlightened faith.

John had heard, in prison, of the works of Christ, and sent two of his disciples to inquire of Him, whether He was the Messiah, and "Jesus answered and said unto them, go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. xi. 4, 5.) From the circumstance of John sending his disciples upon this errand, after he had heard of the Lord's works, it seems plain that he preferred from Him an express declaration upon the subject of his inquiry, to any other testimony: and the reason why the disciples were told to inform John again of the *things* which they had heard and seen, was because, as their occurrence was necessary to the Messianic period, it was requisite that he, as the herald of it, should be instructed concerning them. They were points of knowledge connected with his public mission, and not designed as materials for the enlightenment of his private faith. The facts were connected with certain arrangements which were taking place in the spiritual world, in order that the activity of the heavenly influences might descend with less interruption upon the minds of men below. The kingdom of heaven had been suffering violence: (Matt. xi. 12:) men had resisted its efforts to raise and bless them: and the Lord's miracles proved that a more benevolent influence was opening out upon mankind. The knowledge of this fact was a proof to John of the Lord's Messiahship.

When Jesus restored strength to the withered hand, the phari-

sees are said to have "held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him:" (Matt. xii. 14 :) and when he had healed a man who had been blind and dumb, and possessed of a devil, they said, "This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of devils." (Matt. xii. 24.) These are instances showing that miracles, instead of producing a belief that the performer of them was sent of God, induced their beholders to regard Him as an associate of the wicked one, and to seek opportunity for His destruction. When the devils were permitted to enter into the herd of swine, and the miracle was told in the city, it is written, "behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts:" (Matt. viii. 34 :) in this fact, we find the population of a city concurring to disregard a miracle as affording any evidence favorable to the performer of it: they would not otherwise have desired Him to depart. When Jesus returned into His own country, and the people saw His mighty works, they were offended in Him: (Matt. xiii. 54, 57 :) this is a case in which miracles, instead of producing faith, begat offence. Jesus healed a woman who had an infirmity eighteen years; but the ruler of the synagogue, to whom it was known, became indignant because it was executed on the Sabbath. (Luke xiii. 14.) He thought that the miracle could not come from God, because it was done upon His own peculiar day: whereas the sanctity of the time might have been taken as an indication of the Divinity of the act. How perverse is the human imagination when guided by a wicked will! When Jesus miraculously cured the wound which had been inflicted on the high priest's servant, by rashly cutting off his ear, it did not convince those who saw the fact, that it was the result of Divine power, neither did it abate their malignant purpose of accusing Him; for they "took him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house," and procured His condemnation. (Luke xxii. 54.) Even the astounding miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead, was far from producing any *general* belief, among those who saw it, that Jesus was sent of God. Some, indeed, are said to have believed on Him; but these were isolated instances: the chief priests and pharisees were not among them; they admitted that He had really performed the miracle, but instead of ascribing it to a Divine agency, they "took council together for to put Him to death," and not only Him, but "Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead." (John xii. 9, 10.) So ineffectual were miracles in producing a belief in Jesus among the generality of His contemporaries, that it is expressly written, "though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him." (John xii. 37.) And to the multitude who followed Him,

He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." (John vi. 26.) Here the people are distinctly accused of caring nothing about the miracles: they produced no moral improvement upon their character: men sought Him, not for any information which those phenomena conveyed to their minds, but merely for the benefits which their results had conferred upon their appetites. John, indeed, records that "many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did;" but it is immediately added, "Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men." (John ii. 23, 24.) Here Jesus is said *not* to have committed Himself to those who believed on Him in consequence of the miracles which He did, because He knew what was in them. Yes, He knew that the faith which was induced by miracles, was not to be depended on; He knew that it was a mere persuasion attached to the externals of the mind, and so liable to change and extinction. But it is written, that Jesus could not do any mighty works in His own country, because of their unbelief. (Matt. xiii. 58.) Those people did not believe in Him; and therefore, He did not do among them any mighty works: hence it is plain, that they could not have been intended to produce belief. If the people had believed, the works would not have been necessary; for why perform a miracle to convince those who believe already? But if miracles, as is generally supposed, were designed for the production of belief, then the circumstance of His unbelieving countrymen presented an evident occasion for their performance; and yet we are informed, that that was the very reason why He did not perform them. It is plain then, that miracles were not performed with a view to produce faith on the part of the beholder, in the Divine mission of Him who performed them, and although occasional instances of such a belief might have resulted from some of them, it was only of an external character, and incidental to their main design.

The Lord sent forth His disciples with power to perform miracles, and several instances are recorded in which it was exercised; not however to produce faith, but to show its consequences to those who had it. The disciples taught the people, as they were instructed to do, and so induced among them some degree of spiritual knowledge, before any miraculous power was displayed. This mode of proceeding was embodied in the promise of such extraordinary gifts. Jesus said "*These signs shall follow them that believe*:" in My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." (Mark xvi. 17, 18.)

Thus, when men's minds were imbued with belief, through adequate instructions, the Lord confirmed the Word with *signs following*.

Indeed, faith in the Lord was a condition on which several of His own miracles were performed. When the two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us," "Jesus said unto them, believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, according to your faith be it unto you." (Matt. ix. 27, 29.) Here we find that the miracle did not produce the faith, but that the faith was the occasion of the miracle. So likewise at the resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus, addressing Himself to Martha, said, "Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God." (John xi. 40.) When the centurion besought the Lord in favor of his afflicted servant, Jesus said unto him, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." (Matt. viii. 13.) In these instances, we recognize the principle of belief preceding the miracle, and constituting the ground for its performance. Surely the centurion would not have applied to the Lord for such assistance if he had not possessed some faith in His capability of bestowing it. The same may be said of the nobleman, who besought Jesus that He would come down and heal his dying son; Jesus indeed, said unto him, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." Nevertheless, the man is stated to have believed the word before he saw the miracle, for it is written, that when Jesus said, "Go thy way, thy son liveth," the man "believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him." (John iv. 47, 50.) The woman that was diseased with an issue of blood, "said, within herself, if I may but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be whole:" she did so, and Jesus said unto her, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole." (Matt. ix. 20, 22.) Thus, the miracle was a result of faith. To the ruler of the synagogue, whose daughter was dead, He said, as the condition of her resuscitation, "Be not afraid, only believe." (Mark v. 36.) As her restoration was accomplished, he must have believed; his faith therefore preceded the miracle. Of these instances it may be said, that the parties had seen other miracles, or that they had heard of them upon unquestionable authority, and that it was a belief thence induced, which led them to seek for another. Now, these are mere presumptions; yet their probability may be admitted, without at all interfering with the principle we are attempting to establish: because it cannot be shown, that such a belief rose higher than a hope, or that its quality was different from that which induces men, under sickness, to seek the aid of a reputable physician. Other circum-

stances, illustrating the principle for which we are contending, could be produced, but the above are sufficient. We see from these, that miracles were not designed to produce any rational or permanent conviction of what is true; also, that there are many cases in which faith preceded their performance, and that this was a condition on which the disciples were to exercise their miracle-doing power—the signs were not to go before, but to follow those who believed.

It may be supposed that Paul's conversion was by a miracle which preceded his belief. We are not of that opinion. His case, when properly examined, will, we think, be found to be no deviation from the rule above adverted to. His persecution of the Christian Church, necessarily led him to a better understanding of its principles. Men usually make themselves acquainted with that which they undertake to oppose; and in doing this, they sometimes find that that to which they were averse, commends itself to their approbation and belief. Why may not this have been the apostle's case? * Surely there is that in Christianity, which was capable of making a favorable impression upon his powerful mind. Who can say that he did not internally acknowledge its principles, before the occurrence of the circumstance which conduced to his external avowal of them? They who have studied human nature well, know that men sometimes pursue a course which is in opposition to their moral convictions. Many have internally acknowledged the sentiments of spiritual truth, which are peculiar to a dispensation with which they were not externally connected. They have for a time, been kept apart by the influence of some worldly position, or considerations: and the temperament of many has led them to openly oppose what they covertly believed. Who can say that this, or some similar state, was not the condition of the apostle when on the way to Damascus? May he not have been internally reflecting upon the excellency of that which he was externally opposing, and may not this have been the ground of the miracle of which he was the subject? Such is our opinion; and hence it was that he afterwards said, "when I would do good, evil is present with me." (Rom. vii. 21.) Thus, while he was feeling favorably

* There is nothing in the several descriptions given of the apostle's conversion, which is inimical to this conclusion; and it is to be observed, that several descriptions of that event are given by himself, though the fullest is that which is delivered by the writer of the Acts. Some of those descriptions supply incidents connected with the fact, which are not related in others, as is well remarked by Lord Lyttleton, in his *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of Saint Paul*. And doubtless there might have been other circumstances connected with that remarkable event, which are not at all referred to, and especially those which belonged to the interior workings of his mind at the period of the miracle.

towards the Christian teachings, he, for a time, acted in consistency with his profession as a pharisee. On this ground we at once see, that some degree of internal faith in Christianity preceded the miracle which led to his open avowal of it, so that the sign followed the belief, agreeably to the law which the Lord had given.

From these considerations respecting the second group of miracles, it seems evident that they were not enacted with the view of inducing a belief in Christianity. And although some cases might be cited, in which such a belief is stated to have followed their performance, they do not prove that to have been their main design. It is well known that results frequently arise from circumstances which were never intended to produce them. When Herod promised, with an oath, to give the daughter of Herodias whatsoever she would ask, he never suspected that it would have led to a demand for the head of John the Baptist. (Matt. xiv. 7-10.) Christianity was established, not so much by the miracles which were performed by its founder, as by the sound and practical principles which he taught. These principles could, and did, interest the understandings of men, which miracles could not, and did not do. There is no necessary connection between truth and a miracle. A miracle cannot alter truth; nor does truth look to a miracle for its character. A thousand miracles would not prove a falsehood true; and truth must ever remain a truth, independent of a miracle. If a man were to say that he was commissioned by God to declare a certain doctrine to the world, would any miracle prove his assertion to be true? Certainly not! If the man performed the miracle it would simply show that he had the power to do it, and not prove any thing respecting the truth of his doctrines; that stands entirely apart from such phenomena, and its accuracy must be tested by other considerations. Many of the prophets came with Divine messages to the world, but they performed no miracles. John the Baptist did no miracle, (John x. 41,) and he was more than a prophet, for among those that are born of woman there has not arisen a greater one than he.* Thus miracles can-

* Matt. xi. 9, 11. It may be objected to this argument, that it is similar to that by which Mahomet silenced the Arabians who demanded miracles of him, and which is employed by his followers to the present day, who maintain that miracles cannot be required of him who propounds doctrines which no reasonable man can repudiate. See Boulanvillier's *Life of Mahomet*, vol. 3, p. 309. But what is the real ground of this objection? Why, the simple circumstance that it is found in the mouth of a mahomedan! To us, this is no objection. The argument is true, though its application to the impostor is not so. It does not however follow, that because some persons who have been intrusted with a Divine commission, have not accompanied the execution of it with miracles, that therefore no miracles, on any

not be any tests of truth ; Divine commissions have been received and executed without their assistance ; nor are they absolute evidences, that the persons who perform them are sent of God. But the Lord has distinctly asserted the unfitness of miracles for this purpose. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the rich man is described as proposing a miracle for the conversion of his brethren. He said they would repent, "if one went unto them from the dead." But the answer was, "if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke xvi. 31.) In this, it is laid down as a clear position, that those who will not be taught by the reasonable and satisfactory lessons of the Word, adapted as they are to intellectual reception, will not be benefited by any miracle, such as a conversation with the dead implies.

If we beheld a miracle, we should be compelled to admit the truth of what we saw ; but if we were then desired to give an opinion respecting it, should we not say, we are astonished at it, but do not understand it ? The person had certainly the power to do what we beheld, but it proves nothing beyond the existence of the power, and whether that be good or evil in its origin, we cannot say. This being the case, any temporary fascination which it might have induced, would speedily pass away, and the miracle come to be regarded as an imposture or mistake.

If miracles had ever been designed to induce a permanent faith in God, or a belief in His messengers, why have they been discontinued ? Faith in God, together with the intelligence and virtues of Christianity, are now to be obtained through the rational teachings of the Divine Word. If miracles were once useful in the promotion of such results, why have they ceased to be so now ? If it were once a privilege to see them, why are we not now permitted the enjoyment of it ? If they were wrought to induce the sceptic to believe, why are they not continued ? There are sceptics now ; yea there are some who mock and scoff. If such had been their design, it might be said that God was more considerate to the infidels of old than to those of modern times ; but we have seen that such was not their design or tendency, and this is the reason why they did not produce such results on the generality of those who saw them. The cases in which individuals were led by them to look favorably on Christianity, were few and exceptional ; and the faith which rested on these phenomena was necessarily external and temporary.

occasion, can have been necessary. They have been required in particular states of society, and therefore, granted, not to evidence any truth that might be promulgated, but to show that a way was preparing for its right reception.

An important circumstance to be observed in connection with these facts is, that miracles interfere with the freedom of human beings; and that which interferes with man's liberty, cannot be made to an orderly reception of religion. Now miracles compel man to assent to what the senses see, but neither his freedom nor rationality are consulted; how then can faith or information be effected by them? That to which a man is compelled is against his thought and will; because, if it were agreeable to them, there would be no compulsion. Miracles then, so far as they compel assent, are really rejected by the interiors of the mind; they convey to it nothing rational or spiritual, and therefore the persuasions which they induce, after a while, perish. How else can we account for the circumstance of the disciples, who had witnessed so many miracles, having in their Master's extremity, "all forsook Him and fled." (Matt. xxvi. 56.) But although miracles, at the time of their performance, were of a compulsory nature, because presented to the senses of the spectator, yet the record of them after they had ceased, cannot be so considered, because they are not thereby exhibited to the senses, but written to promote free reflection respecting their meaning, — their meaning in all cases being such as is capable of obtaining admission into rational thought.

Taking the above conclusions to be right; we next come to inquire, why those miracles were performed?

To this, several answers may be given, some of which are grounded in the peculiar condition of society at the time of their performance; one feature of which has always been a remarkable ignorance respecting all the principles and purposes of genuine religion. In this state of mankind, miracles were *useful in arousing their attention*.

FIRST then, they were performed to show that there was a spiritual power, of some sort, capable of acting upon the world; and although the men of those times were not able to comprehend the nature and quality of the power by which they were executed, the demonstration of its existence, which the miracles afforded, awed the spectator into the adoption of some sentiments which were conducive to inquiry. The attention of sensual men, to the possible existence of spiritual things, being awakened, a point was gained. Thus the miracles, as physical occurrences, were only for the ignorant and the thoughtless; they are not adapted to instruct the beholder; they have not been performed in scientific ages; they arouse, but do not enlighten; they teach no duty; they enlarge no reason; they impart no virtue; and they have always left the generality of those who beheld them, to see, from their own minds, what was true and worthy of

acceptation and faith, without which, neither worship nor obedience could be of any spiritual advantage.

SECONDLY; miracles were useful in constraining a certain class of men to adopt a peculiar course of action from the excitement of fear, which they could not have been induced to do from the impulses of love. This is very evident in the case of those by which the Israelites were brought out of Egypt and sustained in the wilderness. The design of this constraint was, that those people might be formed into the *representation of a Church*. We say the representation of a Church, because they, being sensual men, whose interiors were so closed against spiritual things, that the immortality of the soul was not *openly* announced to them,* could not become a real Church. The real churches which had existed before this period, had passed away in consequence of those sensual pursuits by which the interiors of men's minds were closed: and now the Lord began to provide for the establishment of a new dispensation, by specially interposing with a peculiar people, and forming them into the representation of that Church, which, in the fulness of time, should come. The miracles then, were performed to constrain a course of action which should subserve this purpose; and also, to become themselves a part of it. Another reason for the performance of miracles, in connection with that just stated is, that the Lord thereby provided materials for some of those historical narratives of His Word, which were requisite to embody representatively those spiritual sentiments He has been pleased to deliver to His Church.

THIRDLY; miracles were performed that the internal sense of the narratives which record them, might teach mankind what it is necessary they should know of the consequences of the entire rejection of religion; and also, to inform them of some essential particulars respecting the great miracle of their own regeneration. It is interesting to remark, that of the two groups of miracles recorded in the Scriptures, one refers to the former and the other to the latter of these two points. Thus, all the miracles which were performed by Moses, before the Egyptians, were of a calamitous nature, and represented such internal disorders as are developed with those who are obstinately blind and rebelliously wicked: while those which were performed by the Lord, were all of a benevolent character, representing the advantages which will result to those who look up to Him for assistance, and rely on His power to save.†

* That this was the case, is plain from the apostle, who says that Jesus Christ "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," 2 Tim. i. 10. See also Warburton's *Divine Legation of Moses*.

† It may be useful to indicate even in a brief summary, these two facts. The miracles in Egypt and their representations were as follows: —

An important circumstance to be observed in connection with facts is, that miracles interfere with the freedom of human action; and that which interferes with man's liberty, cannot be the basis of an orderly reception of religion. Now miracles do not compel man to assent to what the senses see, but neither his freedom nor rationality are consulted; how then can faith or reformation be effected by them? That to which a man is compelled is against his thought and will; because, if it were agreeable to them, there would be no compulsion. Miracles then, so far as they compel assent, are really rejected by the interiors of the mind; they convey to it nothing rational or spiritual, and therefore the persuasions which they induce, after a while, perish. How else can we account for the circumstance of the disciples, who had witnessed so many miracles, having in their Master's extremity, "all forsook Him and fled." (Matt. xxvi. 56.) But although miracles, at the time of their performance, were of a compulsory nature, because presented to the senses of the spectator, yet the record of them after they had ceased, cannot be so considered, because they are not thereby exhibited to the senses, but written to promote free reflection respecting their meaning, — their meaning in all cases being such as is capable of obtaining admission into rational thought.

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"Where the tree falleth there it shall be." (Eccles. xi. 3.) On this principle, it is evident that if a succession of generations die in ignorance and depravity, they must carry those principles with them into the spiritual world — that region into which spirits first enter after death ; and also that they will be active there according to the quality by which they have been distinguished here. Now, as it is certain, so far as the testimony of history can make it so, that mankind had for some time prior to the legislation of Moses, and also previous to the advent of the Lord, become exceedingly corrupt in respect to all religious life and knowledge, it is plain that those generations who had died in this state, must thereby have introduced disorders into the spiritual world ; and the consequence of this must have been, to obstruct the influences of heaven in their descent to man. It may be compared to a smoke, which not only rises and contaminates the atmosphere, but at the same time prevents the sun's light and heat from descending in their purity and brightness. That the action upon mankind from spirits in the spiritual world, was very remarkable in the time of Moses, is plainly evinced by the circumstance that a community of persons existed who were capable of performing magical miracles : and that such an action was exceedingly powerful at the period of the Lord's advent, is fully proved by those numerous cases in which devils are described, not only to have taken possession of the minds of men, but also of their bodies. Now when this state of things had proceeded so far as to endanger the freedom, and thus to take away the responsibility of man, God was pleased to specially interfere ; and that special interference has, according to the Scriptures, been always attended with miraculous results. The miracles then, according to this reasoning, were occasioned by the disordered state of the spiritual world at the time of their performance, and designed to reveal the Lord's efforts to restore an orderly influence from that world, upon the human mind. Those then, which desolated the Egyptians, must have represented the judgments by which those wicked beings, who had accumulated in the spiritual world, were condemned to hell : those by which the Israelites were preserved and afterwards sustained, must have represented the judgments by which the good spirits were delivered from dangers, and led into the enjoyments of heaven : while those which were performed by the Lord in the world, must have represented, and been consequent on, those special deliverances in the spiritual world, which were there taking place, during the performance of that judgment for which he came. (John. ix. 39.) Thereby He opened out the enlightening, the sustaining, the healing, and the living graces of His new heaven, for the enjoyment of those good spirits who were saved,

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the event before us bore some resemblance to these phenomena. However this might have been, the representative character of the event is not at all affected. It has long been viewed as a symbolical circumstance, though regarded as a real occurrence. The bush has been considered as a type of the Israelites, and the fire as an emblem of their distresses; and that the bush burning without being consumed, represented that the afflictions of the people would not destroy them. We cite this, not as sympathizing with the sentiments, but simply to show that a typical character has been assigned to the narrative. While we admit the principle, we take a different view of the subject.

The Hebrew word, *Seneh*, which is here translated bush, would have been more accurately rendered by the term bramble. Septuagint translates it by the Greek word *Báros*, which usually signifies the *Rubus* or bramble; and this is the word employed in the Acts, where this miracle is referred to.* A bramble is, indeed, a bush, but then the word bush is a general expression applicable to a large variety; whereas it is a bush of a certain description which is meant; and so the term bramble, not only expresses the idea of the bush, but particularizes its character. Attention to this circumstance is important to a right perception of the spiritual sense. The Lord would not have called Himself the vine, if any other tree had been better adapted to represent the idea which He thereby intended to convey.

It is very evident from the Scriptures, that certain productions of the vegetable kingdom are mentioned there to denote certain mental things. Thus, when John the Baptist said, "And now also, the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore, every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire," (Matt. iii. 10,) he plainly meant that all those false persuasions which had rendered the Word of God of none effect, were to be cut down, and finally removed. The Lord also said, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit—wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matt. vii. 17, 20.) Fruitful trees are said to praise the Lord; (Psalm cxlviii. 7, 10;) and the trees of the Lord are said to be full of sap; (Psalm civ. 16;) where it is plain that trees signify intelligent men, and abstractly, intelligence itself. It is written, "All the trees of the field shall

* Acts vii. 30. The bramble above referred to appears to have been of a different species from that mentioned in Jotham's parable, Judges ix. 15. That in Hebrew is called *Athad*, and is generally understood to be a species of *rhamnus*; this word however, in Psalms lviii. 9, is translated *thorns*. It is curious to observe that fire is associated with the bramble in both these cases; and that in the former, the shrub itself is represented as saying, "let fire come out of the bramble."

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outmost sense of it, is only used on this, and another occasion, (Deut. xxxiii. 16,) when the same fact is referred to.

In this bramble, then, the Angel of the Lord is said to have appeared, because thereby was represented the manifestation of a spiritual message from on high. It is well known that by an angel is meant a messenger, and consequently that by an Angel of the Lord is denoted a messenger from Him: and who does not see that such a messenger is really contained within the letter of the Word? The essential wisdom of the Word is the Lord Himself; but its several degrees of celestial, spiritual, and natural truth, are so many characteristics of the intellectual messengers which bring Him forth to view. How wonderful is the Word! It is as the tree of knowledge in which the Angel of the Lord is perpetually presenting himself to men. Its celestial contents exhibit Him in the power of His love; its spiritual teachings show Him in the glory of His wisdom, while its literal sense displays Him amidst the munificence of His providence. The letter of the Word contains as it were the ultimate Angel of God; that medium in which He has sent down certain knowledges of Himself for the apprehension and use of the most natural men. It is the bush, or bramble, in which the Lord appears in fire and flame, that is, in love and light, to all who will approach it with piety, and endeavor to comprehend it with intelligence.

But it is said that the bush was not consumed, to represent to us, that the letter of the Word is the imperishable medium, which the Lord has provided for the communication of His mind to men. The letter of the Word is a sacred shrub which reveals to us that "God is light," and so He appeared in the bramble as a flame: it declares to us that "God is love," and so He manifested Himself in the bush, as a fire. The light and love of the Divine character are perpetually issuing from this bush—they are discoverable in every leaf—to illuminate and warm the minds of those, who will open their eyes and hearts to see and feel them. The flame of God's truth, and the fire of His love, burns in this bush, not to consume, but to preserve it as the indestructible vehicle which He has provided, for bringing Himself under the notice and adoration of mankind. It has survived the extinction of nations, and of all their books, and the Lord has said of it, "My Word shall not pass away:" (Matt. xxiv. 35;) there is a special providence watching over its safety. It is sustained by the unabating love of God, and so the bush exhibits burning, but it is not consumed. Hence the miracle was designed to represent the letter of the Word, which, at the Mosaic period, had become requisite for conveying to men the messages of spiritual love and light.

Our next illustration is taken from the miracle which describes the raising of the dead son of the widow. It is thus related. "When Jesus came nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow : and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier ; and they that bare him stood still. And He said, young man, I say unto thee, arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother." (Luke vii. 12-15.) Doubtless this circumstance transpired as it is related. But that which is done by the Divine hand must have had respect not only to present things, but also to primary causes and future purposes. God regards eternal ends in all He does ; and therefore, notwithstanding the miracle seemed to possess only a temporary interest, it must have referred to some fact connected with the state of the spiritual world, and thence with the condition of His Church. Doubtless some cause from the spiritual world was brought into activity for the production of this natural result. The result however, viewed in its representative character, is that only which we can venture to explain. Let us turn our attention to this point. Women are mentioned in the Word to represent the Church as to its spiritual affection : the genuine Church being called by all those names, which are expressive of the chaste and lovely portions of the sex ; while the perverted church is represented by those who are wicked and abandoned. Hence the appellations "Virgin of Jerusalem," and "Whore of Babylon." A mother viewed in the relationship of a chaste wife, belongs to the former class of representations ; it is on this account that we find the Lord speaking of the true Church as His wife, and Himself as her husband. This being the case, it is evident that by a mother, who is a widow, is represented a state of the Church from which the right knowledge of God has departed. It is easy to see that the Church, with an imperfect knowledge of God, is as a wife with a sick husband ; and that a Church which has no living knowledge of Him, is as a widow. It was in reference to this idea, that the prophet said of the city of Jerusalem, which was also a type of the Church, "how is she become a widow ?" (Lam. i. 1.) The perverted church is spoken of as saying, "I shall not sit as a widow." "I sit as a queen and am no widow." (Isaiah xlvii. 8 ; Rev. xviii. 7.) The *widow*, then, in the miracle before us, was a representation of the Church, in which some affection for goodness still remained ; specifically the Christian Church in those times of it, when false Christs would be received as true teachers, and the elect be liable to deception. The *death of her*

only son signified that the life of faith with men would finally expire, from the influence of those teachings and deceptions. Jesus, *seeing the widow in her affliction*, and having compassion on her, signified the Lord beholding the distressed condition of His Church, and His desire to alleviate its sufferings. His saying to the young man, *arise*, denoted the Divine Word calling upon the faithless, (the faithless are spiritually dead) to rise out of their corruptions. And by the *dead sitting up and beginning to speak*, are represented the faithless being aroused into a state of spiritual life by the genuine teachings of the Word. Spiritual life in the will being signified by sitting up, and spiritual life in the understanding, by speaking. He is then said to have been delivered to his mother, to signify the restoration of a living faith to the Church. Thus we learn that the miracle was also a prophecy, in which was foretold the restoration of truth to a Church which had lost it, and that such restoration can be accomplished only by the merciful omnipotence of Him who is "the truth."

Another example is afforded by the promise made to the disciples. It is thus written; "these signs shall follow them that believe: in My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." (Mark xvi. 17, 18.) Now although the immediate disciples of the Lord did cast out devils, for they said that the devils were subjected unto them through His name; (Luke x. 17;) although they did speak with new tongues, as the event at Pentecost plainly indicates; (Acts ii. 4;) although they might have taken up serpents without hurt, as the case of Paul presents us with an example; (Acts xxviii, 3, 5;) and although there is no instance of their having drunk any deadly thing, or of their impunity therefrom, yet they were capable of recovering the lame, as is testified by the case of Peter, with him who "sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple," (Acts iii. 2-10,) yet these literal fulfilments of the promises cannot include the whole of their meaning. If so, believers must have ceased with the apostolic times. But surely this was not the case; many have existed in other ages of the world, and yet they have not been able to present such physical evidences of their faith. In what sense, then, can those promises apply to them? Certainly in a spiritual sense. In rejecting evils from their life, they have cast out devils: in believing truths, they have spoken with new tongues: in elevating the sensual principles, they have taken up serpents; and if, by the influence of circumstances or imperfect education, they should have imbibed any erroneous notion into their understanding, and

thus have drunk some deadly thing, it has not hurt them; * and when they have repented of transgression, they have laid hands on the sick and so recovered them.

The whole of the miracles may be explained in this way. They are thus instructive for all times, and for all men. This was the chief purpose for their being written. They in whom the Christian religion is in the process of being established, are experiencing spiritual miracles from the Lord, analogous to those which He performed in the world, while He was engaged in planting the Christian dispensation. Nor does this representative character of miracles belong only to those which were performed at the Lord's advent; but to all others which are recorded in the Word.

But there is another class of miracles to which it may be proper to advert, before closing these illustrations; these are such as are not to be understood in the precise sense in which the literal terms describe them. The chief of these we will endeavor to explain, though briefly, both as to their natural and spiritual senses. They are as follow: 1st., the vision and speaking of Balaam's ass; (Num. xxii. 23, 30;) 2nd., the standing still of the sun and moon, (Joshua x. 13,) and 3rd., the retrogression of the shadow on the dial of Abaz. (2 Kings xx. 11.) We think that there are circumstances connected with these supposed events, or something in the narratives relating them, which show that they ought not to be understood in an absolutely literal sense. By this we do not mean that these relations indicate no miracles, but simply that they were not of that physical kind which is commonly supposed. And also, that they are written in the form in which we have them, for the sake of properly expressing the spiritual sense.

For instance, the ass of Baalam is said to have seen an angel, and to have spoken for the purpose of rebuking the severity of his master. Now these two circumstances imply, that the brute was at once endowed with the capability of spiritual vision, the impulses of rational thought, and a knowledge of the Syriac language; and therefore, such miracles imply others equally strange with those which are written. It may be said, that as miracles, effected by the special interposition of God, they are no more wonderful than many others which are recorded, and

* It is important to remark, that it is evils of life rather than the errors of faith which condemn. "Not that which goeth *into* the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh *out* of the mouth, this defileth a man." Matt. xv. 11. That which goeth into the mouth represents that which enters into the memory; but that which cometh out of the mouth, represents that which arises from the heart. Thus, it is not the erroneous sentiments of memory and thought, which bring a man into condemnation, but the evil principles of affection and life. Man is not what his *doctrine* is, but what his *life* is.

that therefore they are quite as credible as the rest. We are not of this opinion. This is the only case in which capabilities proper only to man, are ascribed to a brute.* There is nothing analogous to this recorded throughout the Scriptures: it stands as a peculiar and isolated case, and as such it should be examined. It may be urged that when the apostle said, "The dumb ass speaking with man's voice, reproved the madness of the prophet," he decided in favor of the literal sense of that portion of the Mosaic record. We do not think so. The apostle simply repeats the circumstance as he finds it in the history; he casts no additional light upon it, and therefore, so far as apostolic explanation is concerned, it remains precisely where it was. Critics have been more interested with the speaking of the ass, than about his seeing an angel; but this appears to us to be the point which decides that the narrative ought not to be literally understood. Grave objections have always been urged against it, and learned men have been compelled, in their discussions of the subject, to evade and qualify the sense of it. Thus Gregory, of Nyssa, suggests that the speaking of the ass might have been nothing more than some unusual bray, but that Balaam who had practised the art of divination, and drawing presages from the cries of beasts, gave to the sounds those interpretations which Moses has recorded; and others, among whom are Maimonides, Leibnitz, and Hengstenberg, insist that the circumstances are to be referred, either to a vision or dream of Balaam himself. Dr. Jortin, who seems to have considered the angel to have been seen by the ass, regards the rest of the transaction to have occurred to Balaam in a trance.† Thus, the difficulties which beset the literal sense of the subject, have so divided the opinions of scholars that nothing respecting its true meaning has been settled. We however, think that a rational explanation, in clear consistency with the purpose of the narration, can be obtained by referring the transaction to an ecstatic state in Balaam. It is contrary to the order of creation for an ass to see an angel, or to be capable of human speech; and therefore, it is utterly improbable that those things should have occurred. Nevertheless,

* What is written of the serpent speaking to Eve is a *pure* allegory, intended to represent the insinuations of the sensual principle by which the Fall of Man was effected. See the Author's *Antediluvian History*, chap. x.

† See Kitto's *Cyclo. Bib. Lit. Art.* Balaam. Dr. Jortin's *Dissertation on Balaam*. Bishop Newton, in his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, objects to Dr. Jortin's interpretation, contending that as the eye, the mouth, and tongue of the brute were under God's direction, the whole matter ought to be received as it is related. But to this the defenders of Dr. Jortin's opinion reply that God could have caused the trance in Balaam quite as well as the circumstances literally related; and that they would have been recorded as they occurred or seemed to occur, in the one case as well as in the other. Persons relate strange incidents of dreams, particularly when they make vivid impressions. — Rev. J. Hewlett's *Annotations*, etc.

phenomena might have been presented both to the eyes and ears of Balaam himself, which his perverted state would lead him to refer entirely to the ass. This we believe to have been the case, and that the narration simply records the circumstances as they appeared to Balaam, and not as they really were. Instances of this kind of writing are very numerous in the Scriptures, for some of which, and for reasons respecting it, the reader is referred to a preceding chapter. (See page 116.) It is easy to conceive that when Balaam, on his journey, saw an angel with a sword obstructing his way; he would at first regard him as a man, and naturally conclude that the same sight was visible to his beast. The animal took a devious course simply in consequence of the inattention of the rider, whose mind was occupied by the object which he saw. For this, in his perversity, he smote the beast, which fell, and probably expressed his sufferings by some unusual sounds, which Balaam mistook for the angelic dictate by which he was reproved. It is then said, that "the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam and he saw the angel," which means, that he was then first made conscious that the being, whom he had been seeing all along, was an angel of the Lord, and therefore he became alarmed and fell upon his face.

This view of the case recognizes the performance of a miracle, though it brings it into an analogy with others which the Scriptures relate. Those *appearances* were consequent on the perversity of Balaam's mind: it being a law that, to the froward, heavenly things must appear otherwise than they actually are.

Besides this explanation of the circumstance, it contains a spiritual sense, and it is for the sake of the proper representation of this, that the narrative is so remarkably constructed. In this sense, by Balaam are represented those who speak favorably of the things of the Church, and yet cherish a disposition, and pursue a conduct, by which they are destroyed. This is evident from what is written of his sayings respecting God and the sons of Israel, and his subsequent transaction with the king of Moab. But by his *ass* was represented the scientific knowledges, through which such persons conduct their hypocrisy. The reason of this signification is because beasts in general are mentioned in the Word, as types of things belonging to man's intellect and will. For instance, lambs, sheep, kids, goats, and oxen, denote certain orderly affections of the will, and hence they were employed in the sacrificial worship of the ceremonial Church; but horses, mules, camels, and asses, represent various things of the understanding, according to the subject treated of, in which those beasts are named. Hence, Zechariah describes one of the disasters, which was to attend those who resist the establishment of the Lord's Church, as consisting of the "plague of the horse,

of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all beasts that shall be in these tents," (chap. xiv. 15,) by which is meant, that with such persons, the whole series of intellectual things will be perverted. Among those things are scientific knowledges, of which the ass is significant. Judges and kings are described as riding upon asses, (Judges v. 10; Zechariah ix. 9, 10,) because the truth, by which judgments are executed, and the laws by which royalty governs, are carried forward by means of scientifics. By scientifics we do not mean philosophical scientifics, but the external orderly knowledges of Revelation. Samson is stated to have slain the Philistines with the jaw bone of an ass, (Judges xv. 16,) to show that the false principles of faith which the Philistines represented, are to be destroyed by the strong scientifics of the Word. And the Lord is described as coming to Jerusalem upon an ass, (Zec. ix. 9, 10; Matt. xxi. 2, 5, 7,) because the Divine truth, of which He was the impersonation, is introduced to the Church through the medium of the letter of His Word. Issachar is described as a strong ass, (Gen. xlix. 14,) because, by Issachar is represented those, who, in some respects like Balaam, are lovers of recompense; and hence his name, in the original tongue, denotes *hire*. He is said to be a strong ass, because such persons are in the ultimate scientifics, rather than in the essential life of religion. Balaam's ass, then, represented the scientific knowledges of the religion which his master professed, and therefore, the ass is described as seeing an angel of the Lord, and also as speaking with his voice. These knowledges, (notwithstanding man's disposition to enjoy the wages of unrighteousness,) do occasionally recognize the messages of Divine truth, and sometimes they administer reproof which conduces to obedience. Thus, wicked men, who by their knowledge of religion, obtain occasional glimpses of spiritual truth, and feel humiliated by its rebukes, are realizing in themselves the representative history of Balaam and his ass. Although then the miracle was not precisely such as it may appear to the ordinary reader, yet it was one of great moral interest, because it reveals an important circumstance, which occasionally transpires with the class of men of whom Balaam is the chief.

Another instance in which a miracle is indicated, and yet as we believe, is described in a way different from that in which it really happened, occurs in Joshua; "and the sun stood still, and the moon staid, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." "The sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day." (Joshua x. 13.) It is admitted upon all hands, that the miracle did not happen as it is here related. The sun, with the exception of a rotation upon its axis, is nearly a stationary body; and the cause of day and night is not from his motions, but from the diurnal revolution of

the earth. Now the staying of this revolution would cause an appearance as if the sun were arrested in his course, and therefore this circumstance is commonly supposed to have been the actual phenomenon adverted to by the writer, and that he expressed himself *ad captum vulgi*, or popularly, rather than philosophically.* This is an admission of one great principle for which we have contended in a preceding chapter, namely, that in the Scriptures, there are recorded appearances which are not genuinely true. But it is objected to the miracle, even in this form of it, that it could not possibly have transpired without inverting the whole order of nature, and that therefore, it is unlike every other miracle recorded in the Word. We will not urge the difficulties which must have transpired on the supposition of its occurrence. They are generally known. But they were never answered. The objectors have been told that "the machine of the universe is in the hand of God; and that he can stop the motion of any part, or the whole, with less trouble than any of us can stop a watch." (Bishop Watson's *Apology*.) Appeals to omnipotence may *silence*, but they do not *satisfy*. Besides, the question is not whether God can do these extraordinary things; the possibility of it may be most fully admitted, and yet, the question whether He has really done so be left entirely open. The argument for a possibility, and the ascertainment of a fact, are two entirely separate points. It may be possible for God to arrest the course of the universe, but that is a very different thing from the assertion that He has actually done so. Now has He really done so? Yes, is the orthodox answer. But where is the evidence? The narrative of Joshua. But that is assuming the interpretation to be settled in the very face of the fact that its accuracy is questioned. If such a circumstance as arresting the revolution of the earth for several hours had actually occurred, it must have been known to the inhabitants of every portion of it. Some would have been surprised that the sun was not rising, and others that he was not setting in his usual

* Dr. A. Clarke is to be excepted from the generality of the commentators who hold this view. He supposes that the rotation of the sun on his axis is the cause of the rotation of the earth on hers; and thence concludes that when Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, he spoke with scientific accuracy, because he knew that in arresting the rotation of the sun, the motion of the earth would cease, and thus the day be prolonged to complete his conquest. Is not this a *curiosity in science*? Is it true that the rotation of the sun on his axis is the cause of the diurnal revolution of the earth? Does astronomy know any thing about such a proposition? Can mathematicians solve the supposition? But after all, it comes to the idea that it was the earth's revolution which had to be arrested to accomplish the point; and the above supposition is hazarded merely to defend the notion of Joshua speaking with scientific accuracy, as though that were a principle to be insisted on in every part of the Word.

way; so that such an event could not have failed to have made a deep impression; neither could it have escaped being laid hold of by the history and tradition of the nations. But what is the fact? Why, there are no histories, nor are there any traditions of such phenomena, among any people of the earth. This difficulty some reply to by saying, "it is sufficient to observe that the earliest authentic histories of other nations do not go so far back as this period by many hundred years." (Henry and Scott's *Commentary*.) But Procopius mentions a Phœnician inscription, near the city of Tingis, in Mauritania, the sense of which was, "we are those who fled before the face of Joshua the robber, the son of Nun," "We are the Canaanites whom Joshua the robber persecuted." (Rev. C. H. F. Bialloblotzky, *Ph. D. Gottingen*. Article "Joshua," Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Bib. Lit.*) Thus there is monumental history back to the time of Joshua, in which he is expressly mentioned, and yet there are no intimations respecting the phenomena under consideration. The above reply, then, does not meet the difficulty. Others have pretended that the stories of Phaeton, Jupiter and Alcmena, and other classical fables, were founded on reminiscences of this miracle; and also that it is referred to in the report which Herodotus obtained from the Egyptian priests, of which he says that during 11,340 years "the sun had four times deviated from his ordinary course, having twice risen where he uniformly goes down, and twice gone down where he uniformly rises." (Herodotus *Euterpe*, cxlii.) A Chinese tradition, in which it is said that in the time of the emperor Yao, the sun did not set for ten days, is likewise cited as an indication of the miracle having been observed in that portion of the world. (*Pictorial Bible*.) But it is easy to see that all these bear too slight a resemblance to the miracle of Joshua to have been taken from that event. No trace of the circumstance is observable in the Psalms, in which mention is made of almost every other miracle recorded in the early portions of the Word. Neither is it referred to by the apostle, though an apparently good occasion was afforded for doing so, when noticing the destruction of Jericho and the story of Rahab, (Heb. xi. 30, 31,) nor by any other writer of the New Testament. Besides, it is said in Deuteronomy, which was evidently written posterior to the time of this transaction, "there arose not a prophet like unto Moses in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt." (Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11.) But this miracle, literally understood, exceeds all those that were performed by Moses. Those of the Jewish legislator were confined to a locality, but that of Joshua must have been extended throughout the universe. Does not this show, that the narrative should be understood only in some limited sense? The prophet

Habakkuk is sometimes considered to have referred to it in the following passage: "the sun and moon stood still in their habitation, at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear." (Hab. iii. 11.) This, supposing it to be a correct translation of the original,* is but a repetition of Joshua's terms, and therefore, it still leaves their explanation to be sought. The context of the passage is eminently symbolical; and the passage itself must be so considered.

The narrative of Joshua is plainly constructed in the prophetic style, for the circumstance was prophetically spoken of by a preceding writer. After recording the event which had transpired, it is said, "is not this written in the book of Jasher?" thus the occurrence was recognized to have been the fulfilment of a prediction contained in that book; and the language of that prediction is, "so the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day." (Joshua x. 13.) The sun, indeed, is always in the midst of heaven, and never *hastes* to set; but as the style of prophecy is not literal but poetical, the terms of it are no more to be taken in a strictly grammatical sense, than are those which say of the stars, that in their courses they fought against Sisera, (Judges v. 20,) or of the sun and moon, that they were turned into darkness and blood. (Joel ii. 31; Acts ii. 20.) The Greek and Latin poets, and even our own Shakspeare, have employed the idea of the sun stopping in his course, as a purely poetic image. Thus, Callimachus, speaking of the nymphs who attended the goddess Diana, says, "the sun never passed by that beautiful choir, but having stopped his chariot, he gazed at them; and on those occasions the days are prolonged." (*Hymn to Diana*, l. 180. *Rev. J. Hewlett's Translation*.) Statius also, adverting to crimes that were about to be perpetrated during an approaching night, writes,

"Late and unwilling to his watery bed
The sun retired, and veiled his radiant head,

* Although we do not raise any objection on this point, there are good reasons for thinking that a more correct representation of the original could be effected. The Hebrew verb in the above passage, is used differently from what it is in Joshua. In Joshua it is *דָּמָה* *dom*, and in Habakkuk it is *עָמַד* *omd*, and the latter, according to Parkhurst, signifies "to continue to be sustained in the same condition, whether of *motion* or of *rest*." It is also in the singular number, though there are no two nouns in connection agreeing with it, and forming the plural. This has led to the conjecture that the verb belonging to the nominative, *sim*, has been dropped out of the text, together with the copulative *vau*; and from hence the meaning of the passage is thought to be this, *that the sun and the moon were first fixed in their habitation by the power of God*. The Septuagint version favors this view. In that, the verb *ἔστη*, agreeing with the sun, has been supplied, which seems to show that it was in the Hebrew copy from which the Septuagint translated.

Detained by Jove ; nor ever did the day
So long survive his setting ray." *

Lucan likewise, describing the anxieties of a female for the safety of a youth, says :

" Then, while the secret dark their footsteps hides,
Homeward the youth, all pale for fear, she guides,
And, 'fore the light began to streak the east,
With potent spells the dawning she repressed,
Commanded night's obedient queen to stay,
And, till they reached the camp, withheld the rising day." †

And Shakspeare makes Juliet express her impatience for the approach of night, by saying

" Gallop apace you fiery-footed steeds
Towards Phœbus' lodging : such a waggoner
As Phaeton would whip you to the west
And bring in cloudy night immediately." ‡

The language of Joshua himself upon the occasion is plainly poetical,

" Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon,
And thou moon in the valley of Ajalon ;"

and although it is immediately added, "the sun stood still and the moon staid," yet this must be understood to have taken place in no other sense than that included in the apostrophe. Some scholars translate the original word *dom*, "be silent." This is the sense of it as given in the marginal reading ; and others maintain that if it ever means "be still," it must be as a metaphor. Other verbal criticisms could be successfully produced to show the poetic, or more properly the prophetic style in which the whole narrative is composed ; but what has been adduced is sufficient for our purpose. We see from it, that there is nothing in the whole case, which absolutely demands that the terms of the narrative should be interpreted with literal precision. By this it is not to be understood, that the narrative relates no remarkable occurrence. Nothing of the sort. What we mean is, that the terms employed are but the symbolical expressions of it. There can be no doubt, that the narrative is intended to inform us that a miraculous light was produced ; and also that it appeared to the spectators at the time, as from the sun on Gibeon, and the moon in Ajalon. The production of such a phenomenon, which should be only local in its extent, was all that was required for the purposes of Joshua, and therefore it cannot be reasonably supposed, that the whole machinery of the universe was arrested, and thus a miracle performed in every portion of it, in order to

* *Thebias*. book v. *Lewis's* Translation.

† *Pharsalia*, book vi. *Rowe's* Translation.

‡ *Romeo and Juliet*, Act iii, scene 2.

accomplish this. We believe then, that the physical circumstances to which the narrative really adverts, consisted in the miraculous production of light in the atmosphere, that it proceeded from bodies resembling the sun and the moon, but that it did not extend far beyond the locality in which it was specially required. This view of the phenomenon fully provides for all the emergencies of the case, and at the same time meets all the requirements of the narrative, which it is admitted on all hands cannot be strictly interpreted. Moreover, this view of it brings it into an analogy with other miracles related in the Word, particularly with that in which we are informed there was a special light provided for the Israelites in Goshen, at the same time that darkness prevailed throughout all the rest of the land of Egypt.

Passing from these considerations, which regard the circumstance as a physical occurrence, we now come to those spiritual lessons, of which the remarkable structure and terms of the text are the exponent and symbols. The devastation of a perverted church, and the successful progress of another are the subjects treated of. The kings of Jerusalem had made a league with five kings of the Amorites, to fight against the people of Israel, and resist Joshua in his occupation of Canaan. Now it is well known that by the people of Israel were represented the principles of the Church; and Joshua as their leader, was a type of the Lord, from whom, in states of spiritual warfare, all light and counsel, and victory are obtained. It is also well known, that those nations by whom the progress of the Israelites was opposed, were representative of the spiritual enemies of the Church. Hence, by the kings of Jerusalem were denoted the influence of false principles; and by the kings of the Amorites, were represented the power of evil loves. The defeat and signal overthrow of those kings, by the people under the command of Joshua, were symbols of the conquests which are made by the true Church when directed by the Lord. Now it was when the Amorites were delivered up before the children of Israel, and thus at the time of their complete defeat, that Joshua said, "sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon." This was said to teach us, that God's Israel may know that *love* is silent, and that *faith* is dumb, with all those by whom its peace and progress are opposed. To be *silent* and *dumb* is the import of the original word, which in our translation, is "be still." And these are said to have taken place on Gibeon and in Ajalon, because the former as a mountain denoted the lofty things of a perverted will, and therefore Gibeon, as a Hebrew word, expresses the idea of the *elevation of iniquity*: and the latter, as a valley, represented the depressed sentiments

of an understanding in captivity, and hence Ajalon, as a Hebrew term, denotes a *chain*.

The sun it is well known, is a type of love, and the moon an emblem of faith. When, then, those two spiritual luminaries become silent in the affection, and dumb in the thoughts of men, it is plain that the Church with them is in a state of devastation. And that this was really the case with the Moabites, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, at this time, is evident. For those people were the descendants of that branch of the ancient or Noetic church, which has taken up their residence in Canaan, and where, consequently, some of its principles had long prevailed; though they had been successively declining, and finally perished with the idolatrous generations extant at the time of the occurrence before us. So that while the standing still of the sun and the moon, when viewed in relation to the Moabitish people, represented the inaction of love and faith with all those who pursue an evil course, the same event may be contemplated in reference to the Israelitish army; because the command for its occurrence, was given in the sight of Israel, and the phenomena were continued "until the people had avenged themselves of their enemies." It is no uncommon circumstance for the same objects to be viewed under different aspects, in consequence of the different states of the beholder, and therefore to one they may be ominous of evil, while to another they may be indicative of good. The same sun which hardens the clay, softens the wax; so the same phenomenon which signifies the desolation of the Church among the wicked, will also represent its prosperity among the good; consequently to such, (for the children of Israel represented them,) the standing still of the sun and moon until they avenge themselves of their enemies, will denote the steady continuance of love and faith, until evil activities and false persuasions are removed. And the truth of this view of the case is clearly corroborated by that beautiful passage of the prophet, where, treating of the regenerate, he says, "thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." (Isaiah lx. 20.)

From these considerations we learn, that although light was miraculously prolonged upon the occasion treated of, it was not accomplished in the precise way in which the narrative relates it, but that nevertheless it so appeared to the spectators; and also that those terms were employed because they expressed those objects and circumstances by which the spiritual facts adverted to, could, according to the nature of Divine composition, be most appropriately represented.

The retrogression of the shadow on the sundial of Ahaz was

mentioned as another miracle partaking of the same general features. It is thus written, "I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria: and I will defend this city. And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that He hath spoken; Behold I will bring again the shadow of the degrees which is gone down in the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backwards. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down."* It is admitted upon all hands, that the return of the sun is a phenomenon which could only have taken place in appearance. Such a circumstance as the sun moving out of his position, so as to produce the recession of a shadow on a dial, would, like the sun standing still, have been attended with disastrous consequences. And although such an appearance might have been produced by arresting the revolution of the earth, yet such an event as this would have disturbed the mechanism of the whole universe. The occurrence then must be accounted for on other grounds: what these are will presently appear.

We never see the sun in his true place. The rays of light which come from that luminary, the moment they enter the atmosphere of the earth, have their course changed. Some idea of this phenomenon may be formed from the well-known fact, that a straight rod, when partly thrust into water, presents the appearance of being suddenly twisted. The reason is, that the rays of light which fall upon the rod are bent in consequence of passing into a denser medium. And hence we cannot see any object in water in its true place. Now, what is thus true of water is likewise true of air; so that any unusual density or rarity in the atmosphere, would necessarily cause the advance or recession of a shadow. An unusual rarity in the surrounding atmosphere would cause a shadow to advance, but an unusual density would cause it to recede. Upon these principles, therefore, either of the two propositions; namely, "shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees," (2 Kings xx. 9,) might have been accomplished, without any interference with the general laws of the universe. The choice made was, that the shadow should go backward, and this, we think, was effected by the miraculous production of some unusual density in the atmosphere.† This would present all the appearance of the sun re-

* Isaiah xxxviii. 6-8. See also, 2 Kings xx. 11, and 2 Chronicles xxxii. 25. The narratives in the Kings and Chronicles, of the same circumstance, are not to be considered as corroborative evidence of the phenomenon, produced from independent sources; it is evident that they each arose from the prophet's statement, and thus had but one common origin.

† A circumstance of this kind is stated to have happened at Mentz in Alsace, in the beginning of the eighteenth century; when by the refraction of a cloud, the shadow of the gnomon of a dial was turned back to

turning from his position, and thus afford a rational explanation of the matter, at the same time that it admits the special interposition of Divine providence for its production. It was a local phenomenon, which does not appear to have occasioned any loss of time to the immediate vicinity; nor was it observed by the astronomers of Babylon, since, on a report of the miracle having reached that city, a deputation was sent to Hezekiah to inquire respecting it. (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.)

From these considerations it seems evident, that the miracle did not take place according to the precise term of the narrative. Why then is it so described? The first and most obvious answer is, that the description was given from the appearances observed; scientific accuracy not being required for the purpose in hand.* But another and the principal reason is, because of the spiritual sense which the relation was intended to convey, and which no other terms for describing it, could adequately represent. This will, in some measure, appear from the brief exposition of that sense, which follows:—

The circumstance was intended for a sign of God's fidelity in the performance of His promises: a sign, in the first place, that Hezekiah would recover from the sickness, by which his life had been endangered; and also, that Jerusalem should be well defended during the invasion threatened against it, by the king of Assyria. The Divine fidelity in those respects was fully shown; but the circumstance was likewise a sign, that the time for the cessation of the Jewish Church would be prolonged. It is in this respect that the miracle has an inner sense.

By a sundial, having degrees marked upon it to show the progress of the sun, is represented the Church, having a variety of states which indicate its reception of the Lord who is the sun of righteousness. The whole number of the degrees inscribed upon the plate,† and which mark the progress of time from the

the hour and half preceding. See Rosenmüller. Also Bishop Stock's *Translation of Isaiah*, p. 109.

* Scientific accuracy is by no means aimed at in the Scripture narratives. Many instances could be named in which an obvious departure from it is observable. The instance afforded by the measurements of the "molten sea," 1 Kings vii. 23, is remarkable. It is said to have been "ten cubits from one brim to the other, it was round all about, and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about." Now it is well known that three times the diameter will not compass a circle, and that therefore, the circumference of the molten sea is not given with scientific accuracy. The reason it is so described is, that spiritual things might be indicated by the numbers employed.—See *Arcana Cœlestia*, 5236, also Hindmarsh's *Key to Numbers*.

† We speak of a dialplate, not to intimate that the dial of Ahaz was so compact and portable an instrument as that which is now known to science; but simply because, in whatever form it might have been constructed, it must have had that which answers to the modern dial.

rising of the sun to its setting, are significant of all the states of the Church from the period when it first acknowledges the Lord, to the time of darkness when He is no longer recognized. The light of the sun which shone upon the plate, denoted the Divine truth which illuminates the Church. The gnomon was an emblem of the rise of some evil principle, and the shadow which it projected, was a representation of the obscurity of thought which such a principle must always beget. When it is seen that the "Lord is a sun," who sends forth His truth, which "truth is light;" and when it is further seen that the Church is intended for its reception, so that its states will always be accurately marked by the obscurities which are projected by unhallowed loves; the reason may be readily perceived, why the sundial, with its shadows, are representations of the Church with its vicissitudes.

But in the case before us, there is a specific condition of the Church referred to by it. It was the sundial of Ahaz; thus, the Jewish Church in a perverted condition. The character of the Jewish kings was certainly a representation of the state of the Jewish Church during their reign. The character of the governing prince has frequently been found to influence the dispositions of the people, and to interfere not only with the political, but with the ecclesiastical institutions of the country. Now, Ahaz was an exceedingly wicked prince. (2 Kings xvi. throughout; 2 Chron. xxviii.) He respected neither Jehovah, the law, nor the prophets, and broke through all the restraints which religion had imposed. He "made his son pass through the fire, according to the abomination of the heathens;" "and he sacrificed and burned incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." Moreover, he "cut in pieces the vessels of the House of God, and shut up the doors of the House of the Lord; and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every several city of Judah, he made high places to burn incense unto other gods." These facts show that the Jewish Church was in a most abandoned condition during the reign of Ahaz; and that his name is attached to the dial, in order to represent it; for he was now dead and the dial itself was in reality Hezekiah's.

It is plain from these circumstances that the Jewish Church was, at this time, making rapid advances towards its extinction; and also, that this catastrophe would certainly have overtaken it long before it did, if the successors of Ahaz had all continued as wicked as himself. But this was not the case. Hezekiah was a superior king. Immediately on his accession to the throne of Israel, he broke down the idolatrous altars which had been erected by his father, and began to discourage all his heathen

institutions among the people, and to restore the worship of the true God in the temple, which had been closed. By these means a better state was introduced into the Church, the progression of its abandoned career was arrested, and consequently the time of its dissolution was prolonged. The shadow which was about to spread a dark night upon the dial of the Jewish Church was thus brought back. The people returned to a more hopeful state, and thus the day was lengthened, to give them an opportunity for improvement. These truths are of easy apprehension; and they afford some insight into the spiritual meaning of the miracle.

It is said that the *shadow*, which had gone down in the dial of Ahaz, was brought ten degrees backwards, and also, that the *sun returned* ten degrees. These two statements are significant of two different facts. The retrogression of the *shadow*, on the sundial of Ahaz, denoted the return of light by which the obscurations of the Jewish Church were somewhat turned away; and by the *sun* returning, is signified that the time for fulfilling the predicted advent of the Lord would be delayed, because the iniquity of the Jewish Church had been arrested by the revival of some good, and it would, therefore, not so soon arrive at its consummation. The revival of that good was represented by the ten degrees. So that these phenomena were not only signs to Hezekiah that the Lord would accomplish certain matters of personal and temporary interest to himself; but the internal sense of the narrative relating them is a testification concerning the spiritual conditions of the Church, and the prolongation of the time for the advent of the Messiah.

Nor is this all. These circumstances are applicable to the man of the Church in every age. Viewed under this aspect, the dial of Ahaz will represent the various degrees of evil which are inscribed on the affections of fallen man; and the shadow of the gnomon will denote the obscurity which is produced by the elevation of some evil love. But this shadow is brought back when the good of the commandments begins to be respected; and the sun is said to have returned when the Lord is recognized to have come to promote his regenerating work.

These considerations could be easily extended, but enough has been said to show that human degradation was the occasion of miracles, and that the design of their performance was to provide certain materials for the Word, in which should be revealed how God graciously interposes to effect man's restoration to liberty and reason. After the renewal of the tables of the law, the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I make a covenant: before all the people I will do miracles, such as have not been in all the earth." (Exodus xxxiv. 10.) Now it does not appear that the wonders

which followed this promise, were more astounding than the miracles which preceded it; and yet it is evident that the promise must have been fulfilled. Where then, are we to look for it? I answer this inquiry in the words of a profound writer, who, in speaking of this passage, says that by it is meant, "the wonderful things which the Lord was about to do, by giving such a Word, as that there may be effected by it conjunction of Heaven and the Church, and universally, conjunction of the Lord with the human race: that the Word is so wonderful, is not apprehended by those who do not know something concerning the correspondence of natural things with spiritual, and who do not know something concerning the spiritual thought in which the angels are principled; such persons do not know that there is given somewhat within the singular things of the Word, in which is Heaven, thus in which is life Divine, when, nevertheless, all the expressions of the Word, are, by correspondences, perceived spiritually by the angels, when seen naturally by men. Hence, and from no other source, the Word is Divine, and so wonderful that nothing is more so." (*Arcana Cœlestia*, 10,634.)

CHAPTER X.

PARABLES, — CONSIDERED AS OPEN EVIDENCE THAT THE SCRIPTURES HAVE AN INNER SENSE.

ARGUMENT. — The term *Parable* has, in the original Greek, a larger signification than it is considered to have in English. Parables occupy a distinguished place in the Scriptures. There is no escape from the idea, that they are intended to contain an internal sense. The term must apply to the whole Word. The Word, the Lord — the meaning of this statement investigated. The Divine mind can only be expressed in human language by way of symbol. The Word is called the Lord, because it is the exponent of His love and wisdom: also because it treats of Him throughout. The reason why this does not appear to the cursory reader. The letter of the Word a Divine formulism, prepared as the medium for expressing the Divine mind. It is impossible to conceive how, without the aid of symbols, God could impart any knowledge of Himself to man. The things of mind can only be spoken of in language used symbolically. Illustrations. Nature an outbirth of the Deity, and each object of it must represent the love and wisdom which brought it into being. Illustrations drawn from human workmanship. Every object which exists, a type of mind, not arbitrary, but natural. The apostle's confirmation of this. The knowledges of this constituted the wisdom of that period, which the poets have called the golden age. Hieroglyphics and mythology, the corrupted remains of primeval wisdom. The fact of physical objects having a spiritual significancy, shown by the ceremonious ritual and sacrificial worship of the Jewish Church. Why the spiritual things intended were not at once expressed. *First*, that the Divine Word might be serviceable to the *natural*, as well as to the *spir-*

itual condition of men. *Second*, to be a hinderance against profanation. A belief in the internal sense of the Word preserves from the infestation of doubts respecting its divinity. The doubting inquiries respecting it, which those make who have no such belief. The parables, a proof of the existence of such a sense. The common notion respecting the adoption of parabolic teaching, not satisfactory. Parables not so simple in their structure, nor so obvious in their meaning, as is frequently supposed. Four reasons stated for the parabolic teachings of the Word. Parables not isolated points of instruction, but parts of a series treating of a whole subject. Seven parables cited, and a brief explanation of the matter in each of them shown to refer to points in the work of regeneration, to which the whole, in their complex, relate. All the details of the Divine parables must have a distinct meaning. The probability of some of the parables being true histories. That they contain a historic, a prophetic, and spiritual sense. The parable of "The unjust steward" considered as affording an illustration of each. Remarks on the difficulties which attend the common interpretation of this parable. The *Historic* sense refers to the delinquencies of the Churches which preceded the establishment of Christianity. The *Prophetic* sense refers to the dereliction of duty on the part of the Christian Churches; and the *Spiritual* sense to the falling away of the love of man from what is internally good and true.

THE purpose of much of the reasoning, and most of the facts which have been adduced in the preceding chapters, has been to indicate the existence of another sense in the Scriptures, besides that which is literal and obvious. We now come to a consideration of the parables, in which the double sense of Revelation is openly avowed.

The word Parable is derived from the Greek *Parabole*, and it has the same extent of signification as the Hebrew *Mashal*. It does not simply mean "a continued narrative of fictitious events, applied by way of simile to the illustration of some important truth;" (Dr. Lowth;) but it also includes the idea of a "proverb," a "prediction," or, indeed, any thing that is figuratively or poetically expressed. (Dr. G. Campbell, *Note on Matt. xiii. 3.*) Hence in our version of the Scriptures, the original is not uniformly translated. In Mark it is translated by the word "Comparison;" (Mark iv. 30;) in Luke it is rendered by the term "Proverb;" (Luke iv. 23;) and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is interpreted by the expression "Figure." (Heb. ix. 9, xi. 19.) Hence it may be seen, that the original conveys a much more enlarged idea, than that which the term *parable* carries to popular apprehension. We mention this because it is written of Jesus, that "without a parable spake He not," and that therefore, the term cannot be reasonably confined to mean, only that species of the Divine composition which, it is popularly supposed to mean.

The parables, as commonly understood, occupy a distinguished place in the Scriptures, and it is very evident from the general tenor of them, especially of those in the New Testa-

ment, that they were designed to set forth information of a spiritual nature. The wise and benevolent character of God; many facts concerning the economy of His kingdom; some information respecting man in a state of separation from his natural body; the beatification of the good, and the condemnation of the wicked; with many other circumstances of great importance to be known, are brought down, by those narratives, to the general apprehension of the reader. There is therefore, no escape from the fact, that a spiritual sense is contained within them. But that which is true of one portion of the Scriptures, must hold good of all the rest, because He who spoke the one, also spoke the other, more or less directly; and therefore, He is said to be "the Word." And this is a declaration of remarkable significance. It not only teaches us that He is its essential author, but likewise that His mind is the essential subject of which it treats. But this fact is not every where conspicuous in the letter, and, therefore, the letter must be received as the parabolical expression of it. And that this is the case, a few considerations will evince.

"God is a spirit;" "God is love;" (John iv. 24; 1 John iv. 8;) He therefore must speak the spiritual sentiments of truth and love, when He condescends to employ the medium of human language. The natural expressions can only be emblems of Divine thoughts. The mind of God cannot, by any other way, be brought within the study of the mind of man. The utterance of a word proves the existence of mind with consequent ideas; it also implies the activity of love on the part of the utterer, for as words arise from ideas, so ideas originate in love. Men could not *think*, if they did not first *love* to think, neither could they *speak*, if they did not first *love* to speak. Hence we learn, that the declaration of God being "the Word," announces the idea, that it embodies *love* as a principle of Divine action, and *wisdom* as the guide by which it acts. As human words indicate human affections and thoughts; so the Divine Word expresses the Divine love and the Divine wisdom. But because these are infinite things, it is plain that finite words can only convey them in the way of parable. Words, considered simply as forms of sound or writing, are, to a great extent, mere arbitrary things. It is by convention that they become the vehicles of thought and love; and to them the utterer may ever point as the exponent of himself. God, then, is called "the Word," because it is the exponent of Himself,—of His mind; of His love, His wisdom, and His person. It treats of Him throughout; of His Divine character and manifestations; of His Divine wishes and intentions; of His Divine wisdom and operations; of His Divine love and mercies, and whatsoever else, the knowl-

edge of which is calculated to advance the regeneration of the world. That it has been provided to accomplish this work is well known, but as the Lord became the "First fruits of them that slept,"* it also refers to the glorification of His humanity, which was the Divine pattern of that spiritual process. It was to show that "the Word" is a complete exponent of Himself; "The first and the last, the beginning and the ending" of it, that He said "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me;" and for the same reason He "began at Moses and all the Prophets, and expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke xxiv. 28-44.) The Word, then, is said to be the Lord, not only because it is that exponent of His love and wisdom, by which they are conveyed to man; but also, because He is the Being of whom it primarily treats. And yet the cursory reader discovers those ideas, only in what seems to be the fragmentary intimations of particular parts. They do not appear to him in the great bulk of Scripture narrative. He does not see how Jesus is treated of in the early portions of the book of Genesis; in the history of the house of Abraham; the story of the Israelitish bondage; the miracles which attended the liberation of the people from Egypt; their progression in the wilderness, and their introduction into Canaan. He does not perceive how the histories of the Judges, the kings of Israel, and the numerous episodes therein, together with much that is contained in the Psalms and Prophets, can relate to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now why is this? Simply because the Church, in the process of losing spiritual perception, has only directed the attention of her people to those naturalisms of the letter which were in correspondence with itself. The Word has been considered as containing occasional commandments about faith and duty, and not as being, universally and particularly, the Divine exponent of the Lord, and the specially prepared vehicle for conveying spiritual things to man. The fact has been overlooked, that the whole Word being spoken by the Lord, must, in all its parts, have been spoken in the way of symbol. Thus the whole Word, viewed as a composition having an internal sense, is in reality a congeries of parables, of which

* 1. Cor. xv. 20. This passage is usually considered to mean, that Christ was the first who rose from the dead to die no more, and that as the first fruits fortell a coming harvest, so the Lord's, as the first resurrection, is a demonstration that ours is to follow. — See Dr. Lightfoot. But this cannot be its true meaning. Moses and Elias, who appeared at the Lord's transfiguration, had surely been raised to die no more, long before the resurrection of Christ. His resurrection, therefore, could not have been the first. The first fruits of them that slept, denote not the first in the order of time, but the chief in the nature of glory.

the glorification of the Lord, and the regeneration of man, are the divine and spiritual subjects.

It is admitted that those interior things are not always very conspicuous in the letter; and yet every intelligent person may be led into their acknowledgment, provided he is apprised of them, and thinks of them when he is engaged in reading the Word. The literal and spiritual senses of the Word may be compared to the soul and body of man. The soul dwells within the body; the body being the means for manifesting the soul's existence in the world. Now, as there are innumerable things in the soul of man which are not distinctly visible in his body, so there are varieties of wonderful truths in the spirit of the Scriptures, which are not distinctly obvious in the letter. The letter is, as it were, a Divine body, specially prepared as the continent of the Divine mind, and men are required to interrogate this body with intelligence and piety, in order to eliminate the sentiments which dwell within. By these means it will be found the source of progression and perpetual edification. As man advances in regeneration, he penetrates deeper and deeper into the arcana of Divine wisdom; he withdraws the veil of the letter and looks into the sanctuary of the spirit; he opens the casket, and perceives the jewels; he digs into the ground and finds the hidden pearls; he sweeps the house and discovers the lost silver; he goes with oil in his lamp to meet the bridegroom, and is admitted to the marriage.

It is impossible to conceive, how, without the aid of symbols, God could impart any knowledge of Himself to men. They, in order to communicate with each other in reference to the things of mind, are compelled to make use of language in a figurative sense. Thus, they speak of the mind as high and low, great and small, weak and strong, clean and otherwise. They also call the affections, the heart, and speak of them as hard and tender. The signification of such expressions is recognized at once. The mind, of which they are predicated, is not a subject of natural extension, nor of material solidity, as the terms high and low, hard and tender, usually indicate. Men talk of going to God, as though He were not omnipresent, and also of departing from Him, as though it were possible to escape from His sight: here, going and departing do not signify locomotion of the body, but the concord or disagreement of the mind with the Divine revealments. In short we cannot speak of the activity of mind, or indicate its quality, but by means of figurative language. Its progressions are not advancements in space, but acquisitions of knowledge and virtue; it is neither clean nor filthy in any physical sense, and yet, such is the language in which we are compelled to speak of it, whensoever we

wish to express our sentiments of its moral or intellectual condition. We say of manners, that they are smooth or rough ; of tempers, that they are sweet or sour ; of conduct, that it is delicate or coarse : nor can we do otherwise than employ a large amount of figurative language in all our discourses upon mental and moral subjects.

Now these are among the leading subjects of God's Word ; and therefore, He, in the communication of His teachings to man, has made use of language in a figurative sense, representing, by sensible images and actual events, the principles and purposes which influence the inner life of man. Indeed, the ideas of the Infinite are not communicable to the finite in any other way. Nature, in all its variety, is an outbirth from the Deity, and so it is representative of the love which desired their existence, and the wisdom by which they were brought into being. The objects of the physical world are therefore types of the Divine principles which produced them, and it is as such types that they are spoken of in the Scriptures. Every object of human workmanship is a type of the genius, the thought, and the taste which were active in its production : and we learn what was the quality of those things, by the defects, or the perfections which the work is found to exhibit. Thus, every object which exists is a type of mind ; not an arbitrary, but a natural type, it being a physical property, indicating some definite, mental exertion. God therefore has been pleased to make use of those outward objects in the construction of the literal sense of His Word, because they are the representatives of the spiritual and intellectual principles from which they spring, and to which, therefore, they must ever bear an imperishable correspondence. As the Divine Word has been communicated to the world in human language, it seems plain that such a medium can only express Divine things in the way of symbol. Finite language can bring down to us ideas of the Infinite only in the way of parable ; the outer things of the natural world being employed to represent to us the inner things of the spiritual. The objects of outward beauty, order, and use, being the symbols of some inward principle of wisdom and delight ; while whatsoever is noxious and disorderly, in the physics of the world, is a representative of all such interior sentiments and states as are contrary to the love and beneficence of God. This analogy is that spiritual science referred to by the Apostle, when he says, "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." (Romans i. 20.) A knowledge of this principle constituted the wisdom of that ancient period, of which the poets have spoken as the golden age. Animated and in sensible nature were then suggestive of interior and spiritual

lessons. Every thing was very good, and so far the people saw good in every thing. But when they fell, this wisdom shared in the catastrophe, and it appeared in after ages only as a wreck. The hieroglyphical writings of Egypt, the fables of the Greeks, and the mythology of the Asiatics, are nothing but fragmentary and corrupted remains of that primeval wisdom.

But the fact of physical objects possessing a spiritual significance, is plainly set forth in the ceremonial ritual, and sacrificial worship of the Jewish Church. The natural objects prescribed by God for those purposes were, doubtless, intended to point to a religious end; and consequently, they were the types of interior and spiritual principles. Nor can it be reasonably supposed that they were chosen without any regard to their natural fitness. The selection was not arbitrary, but wise. The adoption of clean animals for sacrifice, and the punctilious exclusion of those which were not so, plainly show that analogy was consulted. It is admitted that the ceremonial worship of the Jewish dispensation was but the shadow of those spiritual things that were to be enjoyed in the Christian Church, and therefore it is evident, that the writings in which those ceremonials were directed, are, as it were, parables involving ideas and duties of a spiritual kind. Such indeed, is the character of the whole Word, because it is Divine; in some cases its figurative aspect is more prominent than in others, and sometimes it is distinctly declared as in the case of the parables; but these things arose out of the nature of the subjects treated of, and the specific objects intended to be taught.

Some may wonder why spiritual things were not at once expressed; and think that much uncertainty and labor might have been spared by such a course. But they overlook a most important circumstance; namely, that for the Word to be Divine, and thus to be adapted for use to *all* states and conditions of men, it must, in order to reach and arrest the attention of the lowest, be absolutely natural in the letter, for unless this had been the case, sensual minds would have been excluded from its benefits. Moreover, the form of that letter must have been such as should include within it spiritual and celestial wisdom, for without these, they who are principled in such excellences could not be profited by the Word: thus the ultimate sense is so constructed as to contain those interior things, so that it is Divine from the first principles in which it originates, to the last in which it terminates. The figurative style of the letter of the Word, arises from its being the ultimate form of those divine teachings, through which the human race, in their lowest condition, are to be reached by heavenly influences, and so preserved in some degree of conjunction with the Lord. Sensual persons pay little or no attention

to the recondite things of spiritual life. It is well known that they treat all literature that is specifically religious, with great indifference; though a work having a spiritual aim, if interspersed with the doings and events of humanity, stands some chance of procuring their attention. It is for such, that works of fiction, containing religious sentiments, have been sometimes provided. It is then, to meet the requirements of sensual minds that the letter of the Scriptures has been constructed as we find it. If Revelation had been written in the form of a metaphysical treatise, it must necessarily have partaken of a spiritual character, and in that case, it would not have been adapted for the appreciation of the natural mind, for it is written, that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.) If the Divine words were simply human utterances we might have some reason for supposing that they contained nothing more than what they literally expressed; but this is not the case; for if so, they would be human and not Divine. Divine ideas cannot, as it appears to us, be expressed in human language in any other than a symbolic way; and therefore, if it had pleased God to have made His Revelation to men in the form of a metaphysical treatise, it is evident that language must have been used in a figurative sense: for that which has been formed for the purposes of intercommunication in the world, could be employed to express the principles and purposes of spiritual life and existence only as their natural exponent. No advantage would, therefore, have been gained by the adoption of such a form of Revelation; and when we remember that the mental things which have been so treated by sagacious men, are unattractive to the great mass of the people, repulsive to many, received with confidence in their truth by few, and cavilled at by most, we may reasonably conclude that it was not a form suited to convey God's Revelation to all orders and conditions of our race.

Another reason why the spiritual things of Revelation are not openly avowed in the letter, is to prevent merely sensual men from profaning them. If divine truth had been delivered to the world without any reference to human states, and conviction forced upon the mind contrary to its inclination to receive it, it is plain that no permanent advantage could have arisen from it. Mankind would sin notwithstanding; they do so now in the face of many irresistible convictions respecting what is right and just; and therefore, if spiritual things had been plainly enunciated, the effect would have been to have exposed them to the danger of incurring deeper guilt, than that which can possibly arise from their parabolical revelation; for every one

must see that those who rush into a pitfall, during the blaze of sunshine, are much more blamable than those who perpetrate a similar mischief during the prevalence of obscurity. It is then an act of great mercy to fallen man, that the lustre of Divine truth should be somewhat dimmed by the veil of the letter, — that he should be left in freedom to examine, adopt, or reject its teachings; and that its interior light should become gradually more luminous in proportion as the danger of profaning it is diminished. We are taught not to cast pearls before swine, lest they trample them under feet. Wise men do not confer riches on a profligate. They know that such a one would employ them to the injury of others, and to the destruction of himself; it therefore becomes an act of mercy, as well as prudence, to withhold them from him. Men cannot profane what they do not know. So long as the danger of such guilt was imminent, so long the spiritual contents of the Word remain unknown. This was peculiarly the case among the Jews, and therefore, such knowledge was concealed from them. If they had been made acquainted with the interior sanctity of the Word, it would have been like a banker opening his treasury to a thief; or a father introducing his daughter to a libertine. They saw the veil, but were not informed of the Isis that was behind, because they would have profaned her purity. This fact is plainly taught by the Lord. The disciples said unto Him, "why speakest thou unto them in parables?" He answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given," "because they seeing, see not; and hearing, they hear not; neither do they understand." "For this people's heart is waxed gross." (Matt. xiii. 10-15.) They who are the Lord's disciples; — who love spiritual truth for the sake of its light and sanctity, are permitted to know it; but it is withheld from those whose heart is gross, — that is, from those whose love is sensual. Although they externally see and hear the Word, they have no perception or love for its interior things, and therefore, it is impossible that they should comprehend them. The Jews were gifted with as much religious knowledge as they could freely use; more could not have been appreciated; therefore, it was a mercy to conceal it, because it is a law, that to "whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." (Luke xii. 48.) Their interior capacities were too obtuse and heavy for the comprehension of spiritual things.

Nor is this fact to be understood merely of the Jews, among whom the Word was prepared, but likewise of all other sensual men to whom it is given. When they read it under the influence of selfish and worldly loves, its truths are as the shades of night,

and fables seem like the light of day. They read the truth, but do not see it; they hear its utterances, but do not comprehend them. How frequently is it said of spiritual explanations, that they are not understood! and the cause of this is more commonly referred to the mysticism of the teaching, than to the sensualism of the hearer, which, for the most part, is the true cause of the obscurity. The disciples are gifted with a perception of some particulars of the spiritual things of the Word, but others merely see a few general and external notions.

The Scriptures represent mankind as being by nature disinclined to the contemplation of recondite truths. The universal history of our race, and the general experience of individuals, are proofs of this condition; and therefore, the wonder is, not that divine things should have been declared in parables, but that they should have been revealed at all. The parabolical forms in which they are presented, are merciful accommodations to our worldly states. To have presented them nakedly and at once, would not have enlightened, but have overpowered the sight. It would have been like a sudden blaze of sunshine, untempered by the atmosphere, which would destroy the eye rather than increase its vision.

These considerations enable us to see why the letter of the Word has been given in the way of parable. We learn that this is only the external form of it, so arranged, that it may contain Divine and holy things in all its parts; and these are to be opened out to man, so far as he applies its literal truth and obvious morals to the regulation of his life. They who will do the Divine Will, are to know of the doctrine whether it be of God. (John vii. 17.) Interior truths are to be developed, as requisite preparation is made for their reception. What the mind knows not now, it may know hereafter, by attention to the appointed means.

They who believe the Word to contain an internal sense distinct from the letter, are thereby preserved from the infestation of doubts respecting its divinity. It leads them to refer the difficult peculiarities of its external structure, to the imperfect development of their own spiritual minds; and thus it stimulates to improvement, those who are solicitous to learn its wisdom. But they who do not acknowledge the Word to be distinguished by such a sense, are sometimes heard to say of certain parts of it, "Is it possible that this can be divine? Is it likely that God, whose wisdom is infinite, would have dictated this, or spoken that? Can the wars and cruelties, the stratagems and frauds, certain punctilios and ceremonies, obscure statements, apparent contradictions, and the declaration of merely common-sense duties to be found in the Scriptures, be really the Word of God?"

The doubts, which originate such inquiries, vanish before the fact, that all those records are merely the appropriate vehicles which have been employed by God, to convey certain spiritual ideas down to the lowest states of human apprehension. Thus, the letter of the Word, viewed as the veil and covering for spiritual truth, is a grand parable, in which the inner things of human life and everlasting knowledge are exhibited to the world by means of the outer acts of men, and the phenomena of physical nature.

But the figurative character which we conceive is essential to the whole of the Divine Word, adapted as it is for the use of external men in the World, is rendered peculiarly manifest in the parables. It is usual to suppose that this mode of instruction was adopted, because it was customary in the east for public teachers to express themselves in this engaging way.* But the Lord has distinctly told us, that the reason why He spoke thus, was to hide the interior things, which He was wishful for His disciples to acknowledge, from those who were not favorably disposed for their reception. It is true, that the Jews understood the parable of the vineyard let out to husbandmen, as a censure on their nation's conduct in reference to the prophets; (Mark xii. 12;) and in this respect it was eminently apposite; yet it is easy to see that this was only its external and historical sense. Other cases might be cited, in which some general allusion to outward circumstances seems to have been understood by the auditory to whom they were addressed; but these do not set aside those inner sentiments which the parables were intended to contain for all time, and to convey to all people. They are not by any means so obvious in their meaning, or so simple in their structure, as is frequently supposed. The apostles themselves were occasionally at a loss to understand their meaning. When they asked Jesus respecting the parable of the sower "He said unto them, know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?" (Mark iv. 13.) Thus if they did not readily perceive the significancy of one, in which a spiritual drift was somewhat conspicuous, how were they to comprehend others in which it was more concealed? This inquiry was designed to induce a greater intensity of thought, and it shows that the spirituality of some of the parables is nearer to the surface than others. We believe they were adopted for superior purposes, and not merely in imitation of a human practice. Two of those

* It is much more probable that the practice of parabolic teaching was derived from the doctrine of correspondences, the knowledge of which prevailed among the Ancient Churches. And under this view of the case, we see that the eastern practice was but a corrupted imitation of the Divine teaching.

purposes are obvious; *one*, that they might become the vessels of some spiritual knowledge; and the *other*, as it has been said, that this knowledge might be the more effectually secured from the profanation of the wicked; but a *third* purpose was that they are forms in which to embody certain points of spiritual information, which no others were so capable of exhibiting. This indeed is evident. What they contain *is not* otherwise expressed, and the Lord could not have conveyed His instructions in any other way than that which was best and necessary. And a *fourth* purpose was, to afford direct evidence to the consideration that the images employed in their construction, must have been selected upon some principle, so that the spiritual things which they indicate, when employed in the openly declared parables, must also be contained within the same expressions, whensoever they are found in other portions of the Holy Word, in which a similar order of subjects is treated of. The forms of history; the operations of the husbandman; the functions of a king; the affection of a father; the proceedings of a magistrate; the domestic employments in a house; the science of the builder; the activities of friendship; the festivities of a marriage; the cares of a shepherd; the productions of nature; with many others, are all laid under contribution to furnish materials for this important purpose. Those natural objects are not named because of their supposed general resemblance to some other natural things, but because they are the appropriate images of something that is spiritual.* All that Jesus began both to do and to teach must have been guided by some Divine principle. He knows what is in man; and He knows *that* in nature and society which corresponds with man's inner perception and spiritual life, and these things He has selected for the purpose of representing them; and also to indicate, that this peculiar feature of the Divine speech distinguishes all that He has caused to be written as His Word.

Another circumstance to be remarked respecting the parables is, that they are not isolated points of instruction. Each indeed is expressive of a subject complete in itself; yet when examined with a view to ascertain its spiritual sense, it will be found to be only a portion of some other intended to be developed, and thus that it is only as a star belonging to a constellation. A remarkable instance of this is recorded in the thirteenth chapter of

* "Analogy is founded in the *very nature* of things, on both sides of the comparison; and the correspondency or resemblance is certainly *real*, though we do not know the exact *nature*, or *manner*, or *degree* of it; at least we may safely presume this, from the truth and veracity of God, who has made his revelations to mankind under the analogical conceptions and language of the world." — Dr. Brown's *Procedure of the Understanding*, p. 142.

Matthew; where, to the fifty-first verse, we find seven parables in succession. These are the "sower and the seed," "the tares among the wheat," "the grain of mustard seed," "the leaven hid in the meal," "the treasure hid in the field," "the merchantman seeking goodly pearls," and "the net cast into the sea." These, in their literal sense, appear as detached subjects, and seem not to have any very obvious relationship with each other; and yet as to their internal meaning they are most intimately connected; and represent, in a regular series, the successive states which attend the progress of human regeneration.*

This will readily appear when it is known what regeneration is. It is not an *instantaneous* but a *progressive* change which takes place in the character of man; a change from that condition in which he is known to love himself and the world, to that in which he may love God and heaven. The process through which this is accomplished consists of two parts, one relating to the external and the other to the internal man. That which relates to the external is called *repentance*, and it consists in "ceasing to do evil;" that which relates to the internal is called *reformation*, and it consists in "learning to do well," and man is in the process of being *regenerated* when these two duties are in simultaneous action; that is, when the cessation of evil results in the learning to do well. When this is accomplished the purposes of man's life are changed. Thoughts of truth are his chief thoughts; and a love of goodness is his chief love. The truths which have constituted his faith will multiply, and the goods which have animated his charity will increase; both, however, from the teachings of the Word, and with the full concurrence of the rational portion of his mind. Thus a regenerate man, though he live in the world, performs the duties which there devolve upon him from the heavenly influences of what is right and just. He regards his external vocation, as a means of exercise and discipline for his internal principles of faith and virtue. He sets God always before his face, receives the Divine law into his inward parts, eschews evil, pursues good, and becomes "a new creature in Christ Jesus." This being premised, it will be seen more readily how the seven parables above adverted to, are descriptive of the whole process.

By the "sower," the Lord is plainly represented, and by "the seed" are denoted the truths of His Word, the reception of which constitutes the first step towards the regenerate life.

* "An examination of the other parables would reduce all within the same secret doctrine; varied to meet the peculiar circumstances of the persons to whom they were primarily addressed, — but all referring and tending more or less remotely to the truth of Christianity." — Rev. W. H. Tucker, *A. M., Scriptural Studies*, p. 471.

That of the "tares among the wheat," by which it is followed, sets forth the succeeding state, in which, through the reception of the truth, men are enabled to discover the presence of some evils by which their growth in virtue is likely to be impeded.

The next, namely, that of "the grain of mustard seed" represents how the smallest increments of pungent truth, if well implanted in the understanding, will grow and put forth branches for the reception of heavenly intelligence.

By "the leaven hid in the meal," is represented the succeeding state, which is that of spiritual fermentation, or temptations, which are necessary to be experienced in order that impurities be removed, and good confirmed.

The next, which relates to the "treasure hid in the field," and the man selling all that he had in order to procure it; denotes that man begins to discover the good which is secreted in the truth, and also that he must relinquish every thing pertaining to his own selfhood, before he can come into its legitimate possession.

The parable which follows, "the merchantman seeking goodly pearls," denotes the succeeding state, in which the mind, though rich in the possession of heavenly knowledges, still perseveres in seeking after that conjunction with the Lord and consociation with His kingdom, which are the goodly pearls.

And the seventh, that of "casting the net into the sea," gathering of every kind, retaining the good and casting the bad away, represents the closing scene of the regenerate process, in which man is not only careful to examine the state of his natural mind, but also to separate the good from the evil which is there discovered to have been gathered; to the end that evil may be entirely removed, and good alone be loved and cherished.

It is evident that this series of parables was intended to represent the successive stages of man's regeneration; because we find that all of them, with the exception of the first, are introduced with the phrase, *the Kingdom of Heaven is like &c.* Surely it is no easy matter to see how the kingdom of heaven, considered as the residence of the blessed, can have any resemblance to the events portrayed. The phrase, therefore, must have been designed to express the Divine government in the human soul; and hence it was, that the Lord taught his disciples that the kingdom of God was within them. Viewed under this aspect, we may at once perceive why that government should have been so variously represented. Love and faith, through which it is exercised, exist in various degrees of excellence, and rule the man according to the extent of their development; therefore when this rule is in one degree, the kingdom of heaven has its similitude in one event, and when it governs in another, it has

its analogy in another. The reason why that phrase did not precede the "sower" is because that parable was representative of the initiatory process out of which this heavenly government is to arise.

Although, then, we have but slightly touched even the general meaning of those parables, perhaps sufficient has been said to show their mutual connection and principal drift. Our space compels us to refrain from entering into a detailed explanation. We, however, have no doubt that every sentence in every parable was intended to set forth some distinctive fact, and that it would admit of clear analysis and practical application. We cannot believe that the Divine mind has employed words and phrases without a meaning; which those must do who think that the parables were constructed only to convey some general idea, and among whom the "smaller matters are considered only as a sort of drapery."* We think it evident that whatsoever the Lord has spoken must have a distinctive sense, and that every single expression, in the original language, is essential to the main design of the narrative in which it occurs, so that none could have been dispensed with without producing an interruption in that series of spiritual things intended to be revealed. Regarding the Scriptures as a Divine composition, we can no more suppose that they contain a word without a precise significancy, than we could imagine the universe to contain a star which was not

* This is the general opinion of commentators on the subject, and in this they have followed Maimonides, who, in his *Moreh Nevochim*, i. e., *The Teacher Perplexed*, says, "Fix it as a principle to attach yourself to the grand object of the parable, without attempting to make a particular application of all the circumstances and terms which it comprehends." "In parables the scope is chiefly regarded and not the words taken severally. That there be a resemblance in the principal incidents is all that is required. Smaller matters are considered only as a sort of drapery. Thus in the parable of the Prodigal Son, all the characters and chief incidents are significant, and can scarcely be misunderstood by an attentive reader; but to attempt to assign a separate meaning to the *best robe*, and the *ring*, and the *shoes*, and the *fatted calf*, and the *music*, and the *dancing*, betrays great want of judgment, as well as puerility of fancy." — Dr. G. Campbell, note on Matt. xiii. 3. Is not this very like saying that those phrases have no meaning; that they were employed by way of ornament, and not for the sake of use? What becomes of the plenary inspiration of the Word under this view? And how is it to be reconciled with the perpetual value of every jot and tittle of the Word? Matt. v. 18, Luke xvi. 17. What should we think of a person who should say that God, by the sun, moon, and stars, designed to give us a general idea of His glory and omnipotence, but that the other phenomena with which they are associated, were small matters, to be considered as a sort of drapery, and that any attempt to assign a separate meaning to them, would betray a great want of judgment? Should we not conclude that he had a very imperfect idea of God's works? Certainly! Must we not, then, arrive at the same result respecting those who affirm similar things of God's Word?

useful in its position. The circumstance that in every case we may not be able to explain the meaning of a particular word, is nothing to the purpose. Our ignorance of its meaning must not be taken as evidence that it has none. "Wisdom is justified by her children."

It has been supposed that some of the parables are true histories. This is a very probable conjecture. That of the "good Samaritan," for instance, presents all the features of an actual occurrence which took place on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. (Luke x. 30-37.) The simplicity of the narrative, the lifelike drawing of the characters, the absence of all exaggeration, and the terms with which it was introduced, all contribute to favor the view of its historical truth. The same may be said of the parable of "Dives and Lazarus." (Luke xvi. 19 to the end.) It is true that the scene of this is laid in the spiritual world; but what of that? The spiritual world exists; it must have its history, and why not its episodes? The narrative is given by Jesus as a fact, nor does he any where pronounce it to be a parable; and we think it is agreeable to good sense, to believe that many of the parables had their ground in some actual occurrence. No one can reasonably suppose that the story of the "prodigal son" is purely imaginary. (Luke xv. 11 to end.) It doubtless had its general ground in some actual occurrence, though some details might have been introduced, in order to make it more completely subserve the means of spiritual instruction for which it was written; this being the end for which the whole have been constructed. They may be regarded as having an historical, a prophetic, and a purely spiritual meaning. *Historically* they refer to some remarkable events, by which the dispensation recorded in the Scriptures has been distinguished; *prophetically* to certain facts, which would be evolved during the progress of the Christian Church; (the historic and prophetic senses to which the parables relate, arise out of their literal sense;) and *spiritually* to those interior states, which attend mankind during their advancement in religious excellence, or their repudiation of it. To illustrate these views, we will endeavor to explain that which is commonly called the "unjust steward." It is thus written. "There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods, and he called him and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship; I cannot dig, to beg, I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then he said to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely; for the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light. And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." (Luke xvi. 1-9.)

It has been very commonly felt, that the commendation, expressed at the conclusion of this parable, was not consistent with that integrity of principle, and honesty of purpose which are the high aims of Christian teaching. Sceptics have urged that it affords encouragement to fraud, and that it is a panegyric upon injustice! And much difficulty has been experienced by believers in their attempts to rescue it from those charges. The general explanation which is given of the subject is, that it is not the Lord of Christianity who is to be understood as expressing his approbation of the conduct complained against, but that it was the master of the steward; * and that he is to be considered not as indicating any approval of the fraud, but simply as recognizing the address and cunning which had been exercised; in like manner, as talent and cleverness are frequently predicated of some accomplished roguery, without reference to any approval of the guilt.† But this does not appear to us to be a right solution of the difficulty. It certainly does not agree with those sentiments which Jesus founded upon the parable, and particularly with that in which he says, "I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail,

* Dr. A. Clarke observes, that "from the ambiguous and improper manner in which this (commendation) is expressed in the common English translation, it has been supposed that our blessed Lord commended the conduct of this wicked man; but the word *κυριος*, *kurios*, there translated Lord, simply means the master of the unjust steward." — *Commentary*. Nevertheless the same word is undeniably, and with great frequency applied to Jesus Christ, and therefore, the above observation does not entirely remove the difficulty.

† Dr. Campbell says, "probably his master commended neither the actor nor the action, but solely the provident care about his future interests, which the action displayed; a case worthy the imitation of those who have in view a nobler futurity, eternal life." — *Notes to his Translation of the Four Gospels*. But how does this agree with the express statement, "and the Lord commended the unjust steward?" Moreover, is there any just or sensible analogy between a dishonest man providing by dishonest means for his future support, and that of the humble Christian seeking, by Divine assistance, for admission into eternal life? If there is, we cannot see it.

they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Another view will have to be taken of this subject, before a satisfactory apprehension of its meaning can be obtained, and what this is, we will endeavor to point out by considering the subject under the three aspects above adverted to.

And first as to its historical aspect. By a certain rich man is represented the Lord,* who is said to be rich, not merely because "the earth is his and the fulness thereof," but chiefly because He abounds in mercy, wisdom, and every good. And by His steward was represented His Church. The Church is the steward through which the Lord transacts the great business of human salvation. It is the duty of this steward carefully to learn his master's will, and to preserve and cherish all the principles of love, charity, faith, and every virtue, which constitute the riches of the master's household. But the parable informs us that the steward had wasted his master's goods, for the purpose of showing that the Church had proved neglectful of the great duties, which had been intrusted to its improvement and care; and that because it had become so disqualified for the performance of its high function, it was necessary to bring it into judgment and then discharge it.

Now the facts thus indicated were such as had actually occurred. The Adamic, Noetic, and Israelitish churches have all been stewards of their heavenly master, but each of them has been accused of wasting His goods, and all of them have been brought to judgment and successively discharged. Thus far the subject is plain, and needs no amplification.

The rich man is said to have given the steward to understand that his wastefulness had been discovered, and that therefore he could no longer be the steward, to inform us that the Church has always had communicated to it intimation of its dishonesty, and of its approaching cessation. The history of all the dispensations which are mentioned in the Scriptures, proves this to have been the case. When the Adamic church fell, the disgrace was announced, it was brought to judgment, and put out of the stewardship. The like circumstances attended the passing away of the Noetic dispensation. So long as "the whole earth was of one language and one speech;" (Gen. xi. 1;) *i. e.*, so long as the whole Church continued to unite charity and faith, it was performing the duties of a faithful steward; but when it afterwards began to confuse these knowledges, neglect these duties, and

* From this it will be observed, that we understand the Lord Christ to be referred to throughout the whole narrative. Hence the apostle speaks of Him as "*rich unto all that call upon Him*," Rom. x. 12; also, of "*the riches of His grace*," "*the riches of the glory of his inheritance*," and of the "*unsearchable riches of Christ*."

disperse the people, this steward was discharged. And similar events distinguish the Israelitish or Jewish Church, by which it was succeeded. How frequently do the prophets announce its delinquencies, and proclaim its end. The Lord, by Malachi, distinctly said of it, "ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." (Malachi iii. 9.)

But the parable informs us that the steward, on learning that his misconduct was discovered, and that he was to be discharged, entered upon a peculiar fraud in order to provide for his sustenance when he should be put away. And in this circumstance we have represented to us the conduct — the very history — of those churches which have wasted their heavenly master's goods. Failing to maintain a faithful attachment to the interior things of love and duty, they soon began to tamper with the exterior doctrines of truth and justice, and instead of teaching the people that they were indebted to the Lord a hundred measures of oil, and a hundred measures of wheat, they inculcated the notion that a less amount of each would procure their safety. Who can doubt that it was defections in the love and faith of the ancient churches, which caused them successively to be put out of the stewardship? The Jewish dispensation was brought to an end, because it had rendered the Word of God of none effect, by a substitution of traditions. When, then, a church invents doctrines which are not just, and yet teaches them to the people as being right for their acceptance, it is plain that it perpetrates a fraud upon the heavenly master under the pretence of doing good to human debtors. The steward told his lord's debtors to set down a less amount of oil and wheat than that which was actually owing; and so a fraudulent church — an unjust steward — teaches the people that there is no necessity to be scrupulous about acknowledging the exact amount of the good of love and the truth of faith which is really due. It is such unjust teaching as this, and its adoption on the part of the people, which has led to the cessation of the dispensations in which it has prevailed. Nevertheless, during the processes which have attended their consummation, they have procured to themselves a means for subsistence for some time after they have been put away. They have clung to external ritual and ceremony when they have abandoned internal right and justice. Look at the continuation of the Jewish Church! Though that dispensation was put out of the stewardship eighteen hundred years ago, yet it has contrived to live. But what have been its means? Why, although it has omitted to observe justice, mercy, and faith, yet it has paid tithes of mint, and anise, and cumin. (Matt. xxiii. 23.) While it cared not to perform the duties of religion from the internal principles of truth and righteousness, it has adhered

to the observance of certain rituals and forms. It subsists therefore, not from any internal spiritual life, but by external and ceremonious forms, which faithlessness and guilt have separated from God and heaven.

We might pursue this parallel at greater length, and enter into many other explanatory details; but these are sufficient to indicate the historical bearing of the parable. The particulars which are not brought out under this aspect of inquiry, will appear in those which are to follow, and will admit of easy application. We therefore proceed, in the next place, to notice its prophetic reference.

There can be no doubt in the minds of any, who are acquainted with the ecclesiastical history of the third and fourth centuries, that the Christian Church in those periods began to act the part of an unjust steward. Scholastic theology, and mystic divinity then took their rise; controversies broke out respecting the interpretation of the Word; and fierce disputations were prevalent concerning the person of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Trinity. Besides these disquietudes of intellect and reason, there arose among the leaders a love of authority and power, so that humility and disinterestedness were supplanted by selfishness and pride; and the security of dominion below, was preferred to the guidance of laws from above. We cannot stop to go into details. The result is known to have been a disregard to the master's goods. This was the beginning of the Church's sorrows. Since that time, they have been successively widened and deepened; and we think it impossible to survey the aspect it has long possessed, to behold its confusion, to see its disruptions, or to contemplate its worldliness, without seeing that it has been justly accused of having wasted the Lord's goods; also, that it has been put out of the stewardship, and that it is now living on the proceeds of the frauds that once were perpetrated. No honest and intelligent servant would have such deficient and mysterious accounts to present; nor could such a one as the "unjust steward" be retained in the service of a wise man, and he maintain his consistency for wisdom.

Having neglected to observe and do those good things which integrity required, it was not long before the Church began to act unjustly with the purposes of truth. Men do not long retain the wisdom of heaven, after having become enamoured of the allurements of the world. They proceed from inattention to the good, to a perversion of the truth; and in process of time, come to persuade themselves that God will accept them for their faith rather than for their virtue. And is not this the state to which the professing Church has arrived? Has it not set up the doctrine of faith in an incomprehensible something, as all that is

necessary to salvation, and put down virtue as of no consequence in that result? What else is implied in the doctrines of justification by faith only; that good works, though they are the fruits of faith, cannot put away sin, and that those which do not arise from faith, have the nature of sin? (See xi. xii. xiii. of the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.) The Church in which those things are taught, is most certainly an unjust steward; and moreover, it must be aware of the circumstance, because it cannot reconcile such doctrines with the express statements of Jesus Christ, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments;" (Matt. xix. 17:) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets;" (Matt. xxii. 37-40:) "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." (John xiv. 21.) "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body; what doth it profit. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." "Ye see, then, how by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. (James ii. 14-17, 24.) These truths clearly expose the injustice of the doctrine of salvation by faith only, and show that the Church which holds it must have been put out of the stewardship. Under a sense of this condition, it *cannot dig; and to beg it is ashamed*. In consequence of its sensualism, it became incapable of searching into the nature of spiritual truths, and from the same cause, it had not the humility to acknowledge such deficiencies and wants, and hence it resolved to teach mankind to curtail their obligation to the Divine Creditor, and to set down only fifty measures of oil, and eighty measures of wheat, when, in reality, a hundred of each are due.

That this is really the doctrinal condition of the professing Church, could be proven by extensive evidence from its best writers. We however, can now add but little to the Article, which expressly says, — "that we are justified by *faith only*, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." (Art. xi. Book of Common Prayer. See also *The End of the Church* by the Rev. A. Clissold, M. A.) Luther asserts, that "the ten commandments do not belong to us Christians, but only to the

Jews; which is proved out of the text, speaking to them whom he brought out of Egypt, who were Jews, not Christians. We will not admit that any the least precepts of Moses be imposed upon us. Therefore, look that Moses with all his law, be sent a-packing, *in malem rem* — with a mischief." (See Luther's Works, published at Wurtemberg. Vol. I. p. 147.) And again, "Unless faith be without the least good works, it does not justify; it is not faith." (*De Servo Arbit*, tom. i. fol. 361.) Calvin likewise says, "God requires nothing of us but faith; He asks nothing of us but that we believe." (Calvin in *Joan*, vi.) This also, is the tenor of the *Augsburg Confession* as drawn up by Melancthon.* The doctrines of those men are generally received in the Reformed Churches at this day; for the clergy teach "that God the Father turned Himself away from the human race by reason of their iniquities, and so, from justice, condemned them to eternal death, and that he therefore sent His Son into the world to expiate and redeem them, and make satisfaction and reconciliation; and that the Son did this by taking upon Himself the damnation of the law, and suffering Himself to be crucified, and that thus, by obedience, he entirely satisfied God's justice, even to becoming justice Himself; and that God the Father imputes and applies this, as His merits, to believers, and sends the Holy Ghost to them, who operating charity, good works, and repentance, as a good tree produces good fruit; and justifies, renews, regenerates, and sanctifies; and that *this faith is the only medium of salvation, and that by it alone a man's sins are forgiven.*" (Compendium of the Doctrines of the Reformed Religion; *Apocalypse Revealed*, Vol. i. p. 11.)

From this it is evident that faith — yea nothing but faith, is regarded as the means of spiritual safety. Upon this ground it is imagined that God, out of mere grace, can justify the unrighteous if he chooses, and confer upon them the blessings of salvation. And the practical tendency of this is to cause virtue to be held lightly; for if a man can do nothing that is good to promote his reception into heaven, we do not see how any vices he may perpetrate, can shut him out. Indeed, a bad life is not considered by those who hold the above doctrine, to be any absolute hinderance to salvation.† This view of the means of

* This confession contains twenty-eight chapters, of which says Mosheim, "the greatest part are employed in representing with perspicuity and truth, the religious opinions of the protestants, and the rest in pointing out the errors and abuses that occasioned their separation from the church of Rome." — *Ecdl. His.*, cent. xvi. chap. iii. § 2.

† "March 6th, 1738, I began preaching this new doctrine of faith whereby alone we are saved. The first person to whom I offered salvation by faith alone was a prisoner under sentence of death; his name was Clifford." — Rev. John Wesley's *Journal*. Although we repudiate this doctrine of

salvation is presented to the culprit, who is about to suffer the penalty which the law has demanded for his offences. Being no longer fitted for the society of men; faith is suddenly to prepare him for the companionship of angels! Alas, for such a doctrine! If wicked men are to be saved by the profession of piety, at the hour of death, what need is there for religion or the Bible at any other time? But this is not the doctrine of the Scriptures. It is written, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." (Rev. xxii. 14.) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 16.) God has commanded good works to be done as a means for entering into life, and this is a sufficient proof that men are capable of doing them. They who neglect the virtues of the Gospel can have no genuine faith in Him by whom the Gospel has been given. His doctrine in reference to the means of obtaining the heavenly state, is to live and believe; "whosoever," says He, "liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John xi. 26.) Thus faith springs out of life; belief grows out of virtue, and a happy immortality results from the conjunction. Hence, the Lord said "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God;" i. e., they shall know the truth. (Matt. v. 8.) It is therefore excellence of character, which qualifies for the

salvation by faith only, as one of the most lamentable heresies of the Church, we do not mean to intimate that the circumstance of a criminal legally perishing by the hand of the executioner, is to be taken as certain evidence of his exclusion from heaven. What we mean to assert is that if he get there, it is not the result of *faith alone*; and also that the state which produced it, is not formed between the time of his detection in guilt, and the period of his death; that being not a time of moral liberty, but of compulsion, restraint, and fear. The state which results in salvation is formed in the freedom of love, and not in the force of anxieties and dread. We may be reminded of the promise made to the thief upon the cross, Luke xxiii. 43, to which it is common to refer as an example of the efficacy of faith alone. We however do not view it in that light. It will admit of another and more consistent exposition. A single criminal act may bring a man under the condemnation of human law, though the whole course of his previous life might have been orderly and moral. His fall might have been occasioned by some excessive temptation suddenly induced, and the evil itself contrary to all his interior sentiments. Surely such a circumstance as this is taken into consideration, when making up the final destiny of men, by Him who knoweth their hearts as well as their infirmities. And who will venture to say that this was not the character of the individual who said "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," and to whom the Lord said "This day, (i. e. in this state,) shalt thou be with me in Paradise." "The case of the penitent thief is drawn into an example, says Bishop Sherlock, in order to favor the validity of a death-bed repentance; and such hopes are built on it as are neither consistent with the laws of God, nor the terms of man's salvation." — Rev. J. Hewlett's *Annotations on Luke xxiii.*

discernment of spiritual truth. Faith is the fruit of virtue, and not virtue the result of faith, as it is popularly said to be. How can the wicked believe? This view of the subject has been disregarded. Faith only has been respected as the first and grand palladium; and this has operated injuriously upon the morals of society, and broken Christianity to pieces. Thus, as it has been said, the Church which inculcates the doctrine of salvation by faith only, is the unjust steward teaching mankind to curtail the amount of those goods which are really due to the Divine Creditor.

But the Lord is said to have "commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely." Now, in what lay the wisdom which is thus commended? We think that it is observable in two circumstances. *First*, in this, that the corrupted Church still continues to respect the letter of the Word, and to regard it as the source of doctrine; and *secondly*, because it acknowledges, from the teachings of that letter, that there is something due from man to God. The unjust steward did not attempt to defraud the master of all his goods; he confessed that some were fairly owing, and this is the wisdom on which the commendation was bestowed. He did wisely, not by fraudulently curtailing the debt, but by openly acknowledging that something must be paid. Although men plunge deeply in the evils of transgression, they do not abandon every good. There are found to remain with them the seeds and germs of something that is praiseworthy. Although the professing Church has so far neglected the spirit and purpose of its Divine Master, that it can no longer be retained as steward, yet it is found to acknowledge the Word as the authority for religion, and this is a fact to be commended. It has thus provided a means for its sustenance, though the Lord has taken away from it the stewardship. In this circumstance, this Church has done wisely — wisely, in consideration of its having become a child of the world — yea, wiser in this respect than the children of light, because these latter do not love the things of the world so well. The children of light are they who love to pursue those studies which conduce to the happiness of heaven; but the children of the world are they who love to pursue those studies which lead to the enjoyments of the earth. Each class is deficient in that which is peculiar to the other; so that the children of the world, are, in their generation wiser *in the worldly things* of Revelation, than the children of light. That which constitutes their generation is the persuasions which such a love produces. Hence, the unjust steward — the corrupted Church — is found to look to criticism, philology, history, antiquities, and many other extraneous sources, to justify its reverence for the Scriptures, and thus it is preserved in the acknowl-

edgment of its divinity, by external and worldly considerations, affecting the letter. These external evidences are suited to the requirements of an external Church; and as a child of the world it relies upon them with greater confidence than can be done by the children of light. These latter, though by no means disposed to undervalue what learning can do to fix the precise meaning of the literal sense of the Word, arrive at a belief in its divinity, from other grounds. They remember that the Lord said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John vi. 63; 2 Cor. iii. 6.) They admit the Word to be different from every other composition, in consequence of its containing an inner sense. In short, the children of light are those who love and know something of the spiritual sense of the Word; and the children of the world are those, who, having lost sight of that spiritual sense, abide wholly in the letter, and thereby fall into all that inconsistency of doctrine which necessarily results from mistaking the appearances of truth for its reality.

But although the Church has passed into this external condition, it has continued to retain a veneration for the letter of the Word; and consequently to respect a certain amount of its obvious teachings. In this it has been wise. Here was the point of commendation; and in this circumstance it has attended to the Lord's admonition, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

By mammon, in a natural sense, is meant worldly riches; and by the mammon of unrighteousness, in this sense, is denoted riches which have been obtained by acts of injustice. To make friends of them is to see and repent of the evil which has induced the injustice, and to make restitution. The reason is, because such repentance removes the evil, and brings about a better state.

By mammon, in a spiritual sense, is denoted the *spiritual sense* of the Word. This is heavenly riches. But by the mammon of unrighteousness, in this sense, is represented the *literal sense* of the Word; the reason is, because it expresses true information respecting the fallen and unrighteous states of men. The letter of the Word, to a great extent, treats of external and worldly things. It was man's disorderly condition which gave occasion to a Revelation being made through the mediums of the history of his wars and wickedness, of his turbulence and passions, of his backslidings and injustice, together with the precepts and injunctions which are founded on these circumstances. All these narratives, however, are so arranged and so expressed, that they may contain within them the riches of celestial and

spiritual wisdom ; but when the Church fails to recognize and acknowledge these interior things, the letter still remains, but *then* it is the mammon of unrighteousness. As a Revelation, it is full of the deepest knowledge, but the form in which that knowledge is expressed, being drawn from the circumstances and conditions of our unrighteous world, it has pleased the Lord to represent it, when separated from its spirit, as "the mammon of unrighteousness : " and he has told the Church, that when it fails to recognize the higher things, to *make friends* of it ; that is, to live according to its teachings, because such a life will prepare those who do so, for being received into everlasting habitations. Thus it is *life*, and not *faith* without it, which saves. Faith, when founded upon truth, is a lamp which illuminates the way, but men must walk in that way if they would reach the destination to which it leads.

From these considerations we learn something relating to the prophetic aspect of the parable. Every one who will venture to look at Christianity, as it is popularly taught, with open and unprejudiced eyes, must confess that it has not been faithful in the performance of those duties for which it was originally established. It is well known to have failed in retaining rational light respecting spiritual things. The doctrines concerning God and His redemption ; of the Word and its spirituality ; of the soul and its perpetuation after death ; of the resurrection and the spiritual world, are all set forth as mysteries with names, but not as things on which the mind can rest with enlightened satisfaction. The candid, who remain in any of the respective branches of divided Christianity, will not hesitate to confess, that the Church is in shade and darkness respecting those things. How then, can it be retained in the stewardship ? Surely a wise master does not employ those to perform wise services who are incapable of the duty ; neither does he retain those who waste his goods. The circumstance of the Church continuing to exist is no proof that it retains the stewardship ; servants live after they are discharged. And in the fact that the Church, by its dogma of salvation by faith only, teaches the people to set down a less amount of oil and wheat than is actually owing to the Divine Creditor, we have evidence that it can no longer be the steward ; and that it is now subsisting upon the mammon of that unrighteousness, is plain from all its documents. The facts therefore, which have been developed in the professing Church, when compared with the teachings of the parable, are, we think, some of its prophetic realizations.

And now we come to consider what is more properly the *spiritual sense* of the parable. The subject treated of in this sense, is concerning man's falling away from the right perform-

ance of his religious duties; and of the persuasions by which he is influenced to maintain a religious existence after he has ceased to be just. It is well known that there are professors of religion, those who think they are religious, though at the same time, they know they are not just. These, then, are the points to which the parable relates.

By the rich man, in this, as in the two preceding cases, is signified the Lord as to His Divine Humanity, from whom have descended all the rich blessings of spiritual intelligence and living Christianity. And by the steward, which, "was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods," is represented the state of the natural man, somewhat conscious of having neglected to cultivate and preserve the excellence of charity and truth. These two principles are the Divine goods; and they are wasted when men are careless and indifferent about the blessings they bestow; and men are said to be accused of this waste when transgression makes them sensible that they have them not. Every man possesses exterior and interior principles, or faculties. The exterior are those which belong to the "outer," and the interior those which belong to the "inner" man. The interior faculties are formed by influences from heaven, and the exterior by those which operate from the world, and the former are continually endeavoring to bring the latter into a correspondence with them. This being understood, we at once see, that by the steward being called to give an account of his stewardship, denotes the influence of a spiritual dictate operating upon the natural mind; and the intimation that he was no longer to be steward, discovers to the natural mind that it has ceased to act agreeably to the laws of justice and safety.

Hereupon the steward is described to have "said within himself, What shall I do, for my Lord taketh away from me the stewardship," because this expresses the internal consternation which is experienced by the natural man, when he becomes really sensible that his negligence of the Divine goodness is about to separate him from that spiritual life which he had previously enjoyed. And this inattention is always followed by the development of natural indolence and pride; hence, the man is described as saying "I cannot dig; to beg, I am ashamed." The former of these phrases plainly denotes the indolence of the understanding in reference to all investigation of interior truths; and the latter, as certainly shows that the will has become too haughty to make acknowledgment of its spiritual deficiencies. Hereupon, the man is stated to have resolved upon a course of action, which, at the same time that it defrauded the master, should be acquiesced in by the debtors; thus revealing to us that as the exterior mind ceases to be influenced by an interior

sense of right conduct towards the Lord, it begins to look to self for the sustenance of its delights. The naturalism which causes a separation to take place between man and God, is always on the alert to procure a dwelling-place for itself, that is, a state in which its gratification may be indulged.

The course adopted was this—he called every one of his Lord's debtors, to ascertain from them their respective debts. Now this, viewed as a business transaction, is somewhat irregular.* It is by no means common for the debtor to be called upon to deliver the account which he may owe; the usual proceeding is for the creditor, or his agent, to present his bill; and if he sees occasion, to allow a discount. But there is a deviation from this course in the relation before us, because that was not suited to convey the peculiar lesson intended. The nature of this lesson will be manifest, when it is ascertained who are the debtors.

It is to be observed, that although the sentence, "he called every one of his Lord's debtors," seems to imply that there were many, yet, *two* only are actually named. The reason is, because these were all that were necessary for the instruction contemplated. And these two debtors were designed to represent the two faculties of will and understanding; for it is these which stand chiefly indebted to the Almighty for all the substantial things which man enjoys. And it is these which really know something of the nature and amount of the debts which may be owing. This is the reason why the steward is described, not as presenting his bill, but as saying to the first, "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" and to the second, "How much owest thou?"

When the merely natural mind falls into the practice of injustice, it soon loses all accurate sense of the spiritual indebtedness of its more interior principles. It must appeal to them to know the state of the accounts. They who disregard the equity of the Divine laws, seldom, if ever, think of the blessings which Providence has bestowed upon the higher faculties of their minds; and consequently, pay but little attention to the debts which have been incurred. But when misconduct brings them into disgrace, and a check is about to be put upon their career of wickedness, they begin to reflect somewhat more seriously respecting the

* This is attempted to be accounted for on the following grounds. "He directs the tenants to write out the contracts, but doubtless gave them validity by signing them himself; a method probably adopted to prevent those impositions and forgeries which would have been easy, had it been customary for such a document to be entirely written by one of the contracting parties."—*Pictorial Bible Commentary*. There is, however, nothing said of this supposition in the parable itself, and the reason that it is written as it is, is solely referable to the spiritual sense intended to be conveyed.

duties they have neglected ; and to revive some recollections of those blessings, by which the understanding had been taught the things of truth, and the will impressed with the love of goodness. How common is it for those who have stood well in society, when they are brought into suffering by their own misconduct, to think of the advantages which they have disregarded, and the opportunities they have lost. In such a case, they as it were interrogate their interior and better sentiments respecting the obligations they have been under to the Divine goodness, and at once acknowledge that all they have enjoyed which has been really valuable, is owing to the Lord's mercy and goodness. Though a man "fall, he shall not be utterly cast down ;" (Psalm xxxvii. 24;) the right impulses of his inner sentiments are not suddenly extinguished, and these will confess that they are wholly indebted to the Lord for all the advantages they have enjoyed. In this fact we have the spiritual realization of those debtors, who, when asked respecting their indebtedness, replied with promptitude and honesty that they owed a hundred measures of oil, and a hundred measures of wheat. By oil is spiritually meant the good of love, and by wheat the truths of faith ; a hundred measures of each denote a fulness of states in the affection and intellect, with respect to both. The interior sentiments of men in tribulation, will make a full acknowledgment of their obligation to the Lord, so far as they know them ; but there is a disinclination on the part of the external man to permit so full a confession. He will make some concession ; he will acknowledge that something may be owing ; but he will not yield the whole amount. To do so, would be to leave himself without the means of sustenance. He therefore requires some abatement to be made, in order to provide for his own subsistence ; he cannot at once give up all his delights, and therefore seduces his interior and better sentiments into a concurrence with his design not to yield all that may be due. It is well known, that when men fix a resolution to secure some improper object, that they will soon induce their better principles to concur in the pursuit, and thus the debtors, which had been prompt in acknowledging the amount of their debts, are induced to do the bidding of the unjust steward ; and to set down only fifty measures of oil, and eighty measures of wheat, when in reality a hundred were due. This point of the parable therefore, refers to the natural man or mind, inducing the will and the understanding to concur in lessening the amount of duties which are owing to the Lord, that thereby he may obtain more latitude for his life, and more indulgences than would otherwise be the case.

Now what is there in this circumstance which can be considered to have been done wisely, and so deserving of commenda-

tion? The answer to this is the fact, that some duties are acknowledged to be due ; and so long as man's interior sentiments and outward conduct act as one in this acknowledgment, so long he is doing something that is wise, and thus possesses something that is commendable. It is not indeed the highest wisdom, nor does it receive unqualified commendation. Nevertheless, it is better that a man should acknowledge, by his obedience, some of the obligations which he is under to the Divine Goodness, than that he should abandon every virtue.

The Lord said of this transaction "that the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light ;" because the principles of the natural man in the pursuit of their delights, (which are the children of this world in their generation,) are more prompt in doing what is requisite to their attainment, than are the principles of the spiritual man, (which are the children of light,) in obeying those things which are necessary to their future safety. It has long been observed, that natural men are more diligent and calculating in their endeavors to obtain the things of this world, than spiritual men are in their efforts to secure the blessings of the world to come. The reason is, because, in the former case, men have continued to recognize the law of *doing* as being essential to the result ; whereas with the latter, this law has not been so clearly seen, and consequently not so fully carried out. The one looks to perseverance and doing for success, the other relies more upon speculation and thinking. They may possess the sentiments of truth, and thus be the children of light ; but so long as these sentiments are not fully obeyed, the men who have them are not so wise in the pursuit of a successful issue as are the children of the world, who know that such results can only arise from action.

The case may be presented under another aspect. There can be no doubt, that the Lord intended that the unjust steward should be considered as a representative of the children of the world, and that the debtors, who openly acknowledged the completeness of their indebtedness, were to be received as types of the children of light ; now the former was active in providing for his sustenance, while the latter were readily induced to admit of the curtailment of their obligations ; consequently, when the Lord said of one, that he was wiser in his generation than the others, he must have referred to the assiduity of the natural man in doing something by which to obtain his desires ; and to the indolence of the spiritual man in so readily consenting to an abatement of his duties. It is doubtless a wiser course, on the part of the natural mind, to compel itself into the acknowledgment of some duty, than it is for the spiritual mind to allow itself to be seduced into the false idea, that any of its obligations

can be honestly diminished. When, therefore, the Lord instructed us to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, He meant that we were to learn, from the diligence and forethought of natural men in their pursuit after worldly things, a lesson of activity and perseverance in all those means which are conducive to spiritual happiness.

The mammon of unrighteousness, in this case, are those laws of duty, the obligations of which have been unrighteously relinquished. It is that amount of the oil and the wheat which was unrighteously struck from the creditor's account. It is the laws of obedience, the duties of which are no longer considered to be owing. They are, regarded in themselves, true riches, but they become the mammon of unrighteousness, in consequence of the unrighteous states of those by whom their obligations have been set aside. To *make friends* of them, is to acknowledge the value of the duties which they teach, by a life according to them, so that when we *fail*, they may receive us into everlasting habitations; that is to say, when we are infested by temptations, a resistance of them, by obedience to the Divine law, will provide for their removal, promote purification, and finally introduce into us those principles of spiritual propriety and peace which will endure forever.

CHAPTER XI.

HISTORY, VIEWED AS A REPRESENTATION OF DIVINE AND SPIRITUAL THINGS.

ARGUMENT. — It is commonly admitted that the history in the Scriptures, contains a revelation from God. Difficulties connected with this idea. That they cannot be surmounted without admitting that it contains an inner sense. The testimony of the Apostle Paul upon this point, and allusions to it in the Gospels. The importance of this view in all our studies of sacred histories. That mere literal history cannot be the Word of God apart from its possession of a spiritual sense. The historical, the most ancient form in which a written Revelation has been given. This the source of fabulous and mythological histories. *Factitious* history certainly written among the ancients for a representative purpose; and therefore *real* history might be so employed. The New Testament miracles, and the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, commonly acknowledged to have a recondite meaning. Many acts commanded to be done for the avowed purpose of becoming a sign. The choice of the children of Israel; the sense in which they were a chosen and peculiar people. Unless sacred history is viewed as being representative of spiritual things, it will not be easy to see how it can be an inspired composition. Instances which increase this difficulty. The sacred histories not complete histories, but selections. The reason for this. Instances in which there are deviations from historical

correctness. *First*, concerning the 430 years sojourning of the sons of Israel in Egypt. The difficulty to be removed only by means of the spiritual sense. Numbers employed in the Scriptures with a spiritual signification. The Pythagorean doctrine of numbers derived from this signification. What 430 signifies. *Second*, concerning the Lord having gone into Egypt to be called therefrom, to fulfil the prediction "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Discussions on the literal sense of this statement, with an explanation of its meaning. *Third*, the want of historical accuracy in the genealogies of the Lord as given by Matthew and Luke. Matthew states that each of the three parts of his relation consists of fourteen, whereas in the first, there is only thirteen, the name of Jehoiachim being omitted; the reason for this. The second part historically consists of seventeen generations. Why Matthew has arranged them into fourteens. Luke has inscribed a name, in the genealogy given by him, for which there is no historical authority. A discussion on this point, and the reason for it explained. Why the two genealogies are given in the reverse order. Evidences of the existence of a spiritual sense. Other questions respecting the Lord's genealogy. *First*. Why it is traced through Joseph, when Jesus had no human paternity? The historical answer. Peculiar sentiments and laws respecting marriage among the Jews. Their spiritual ground. *Second*. Why the maternal humanity of the Lord was derived from the tribe of Judah in preference to the rest. Two answers: one founded on the psychological condition of that tribe, the other on its representation. The spiritual meaning. A final argument for the spiritual sense in the Jewish history, founded on the everlasting covenant established with Abraham.

SEVERAL points of Biblical history have been referred to, in preceding chapters, to illustrate the existence of an inner sense in the Scriptures; a doctrine which we have endeavored to keep before us as their leading Peculiarity. We now come to consider, more directly, the historical portions of the Word in this light. A large proportion of the Scriptures consists of historical relations, which, for the most part, refer to the affairs of the house of Israel, their enemies and friends.

It is admitted that these documents are inspired compositions, and that they contain a Revelation from God; though these are rather *terms* than *ideas*, in the popular mind, because it is not seen why a special Divine interposition should have been required, to relate facts and circumstances which the writers saw were transpiring around them; nor is there any thing perceived in these events, which seems to require that they should be considered as special Revelations from God. For instance, what peculiar illumination did Moses require to inform us of the fact, that the children of Israel "went three days' journey in the wilderness and found no water. And when they came to Marah they could not drink of the waters of Marah for they were bitter?" (Exodus xv. 22, 23.) And what is there in those events, to be recognized as a Revelation from God? There is nothing in those occurrences, to all outward appearance, but what might have been related by the ordinary talent and common suggestions of men. The narrative presents no super-

natural feature; and it does not seem to have required more than the ordinary powers of understanding for recording it. On the surface, it expresses no Revelation of heaven—nor any thing else that seems to have demanded the direct interposition of God for its relation. Under this view, it becomes extremely difficult to see why it should have been necessary to inspire Moses, to write down a circumstance so simple and so worldly. Nor is it easy to maintain the claims of inspiration for the narrative, if nothing more were intended to be conveyed by it, than what is literally expressed. The same may be said of a large proportion of the historicals of the Word.

But when it is remembered that outward transactions, and the consequent history of men, are but visible displays of their inward principles; it will be easy to see, that certain occurrences may be selected by the Divine Providence, for the purpose of representing certain spiritual principles; and by causing the history to be written, to reveal by means of its representatives, the existence of those principles. In this case, the inspiration of the man would be necessary, in order to lead him to write the point of history selected, in the peculiar way required; and as the history was selected for the sake of representing internal and spiritual things, those internal and spiritual things would constitute the inspiration of the narrative, and also the revelation which it contains. Under this view of the case, the whole difficulty of seeing how an historical narrative could require the inspiration of men for its production;—how it could itself be an inspired composition; and at the same time be a Revelation from God,—at once disappears.

The frequent references which are made to the historical portions of the Word by Paul, especially in his Epistle to the Hebrews, show that he regarded them as containing another signification than that which they literally express. He distinctly speaks of the historicals of worship in the Jewish Church, as a "shadow of good things to come." (Heb. x. i.) He also cites the history of Melchizedec as referring to the Lord; (Heb. vii. 1-17;) and upon another occasion says "I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 1-4.) Here the historical events of passing through the sea, Moses in the cloud, the eating of manna, and drinking from the rock, are considered as the representatives of some spiritual things to be enjoyed under the Christian dispensation. Again he says, "It is written, that

Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond maid, the other by a free woman. But he who was by the bond woman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory.* Here, the apostle distinctly asserts, that certain historical circumstances were an allegory; that is, that they had a spiritual significancy besides their historical sense. He then goes on to inform us that those two sons, born under those two different circumstances, represented the two covenants; from which it would appear that Ishmael, the son of Abraham by *Agar*, denoted the covenant under the law; but that Isaac, the son of Abraham by *Sarah*, denoted the covenant under the Gospel. The principle of an internal sense, authoritatively recognized in those instances, is equally applicable to every other historical event recorded in the Scriptures. We find allusions to it in the gospels. The history of raising the Brazen Serpent in the wilderness, is spoken of as having reference to the lifting up of the Son of Man; (John iii. 14;) so also, is the history of Jonah, in the belly of the fish. (Matt. xii. 40.)

This, then, is an important point to be remembered, in all our studies of the sacred histories. If we lose sight of it, those records cannot exercise that spiritual influence upon our characters for which they are intended. They will then hold no higher place in our estimation, than what can be secured by other remarkable histories of secular events; and all sensible ideas of the inspiration which they contain, and the revelations which they convey, will elude our faith. So long as the attention is confined to the historical sense, difficulties must be experienced in perceiving any other meaning; and men, instead of seeing in those relations any indication of Divine things, will behold in them nothing but the descriptions of worldly occurrences. This course is natural enough when the mind is engaged in the contemplation of secular history, though even in this, profound thinkers will not fail to recognize the dealings of an all-wise Providence; but when it is considered that the historicals of the Word are inspired compositions, and thus written, not merely to inform us respecting the transactions of an ancient people, but

* Gal. iv. 22-24. To avoid the plainness of this statement, this clause is sometimes translated "which things are allegorized;" *Le Pierce*; and also, "which things are spoken by me allegorically." See the *Improved Version upon the basis of Archbishop Newcomb's New Translation*. Dr. Mac-knight, however, remarks, that as "the Greek particles are sometimes put for their corresponding substantive nouns, the common translation 'which things are an allegory,' is abundantly just." *Note on this text*. Dr. A. Clarke takes the same view, and states concerning the histories, that "they are to be understood *spiritually*; more being intended in the accounts than meets the eye." — *Commentary*.

also to represent spiritual things contained within the mind of man, and the Church of God, and the principles extant in the other life, it must be seen, that the doctrine which teaches that they have a more recondite sense than that which meets the eye, is at once true and philosophical. For surely, the *mere* historical circumstances related in the Scriptures cannot be the Word of God, because, when they are separated from an internal sense, they can have no more of a Divine principle in them than any other historical relation. It is from their internal sense that they derive their divinity and holiness: and by this the objections of the sceptic can be removed, and the faith of the Christian strengthened and enlarged. Being inspired, they must be the repositories of mental and spiritual principles; and when those things are chiefly regarded by the reader, the mere historicals, as it were, recede from the mind; but when the attention is principally directed to the meaning of the letter, the internal sense ceases to appear, and becomes, as it were, obliterated. These cases may be compared to the recognition which is given by certain minds to the things of religion and the things of science. The things of spiritual life fall into obscurity and disappear, with those who think that all wisdom consists in the knowledge of science and its pursuits;* and with those who are mostly influenced by the love of vital and heavenly things, sensual wisdom is a retiring object which would not be seen at all, if it were not admissible of some light to confirm their faith in the Divine existence. These see the historicals of the Word as the vehicles of a higher intelligence than that which can be furnished by the letter. The outward expressions are attended to as objects, like the objects of sight, which present matter and give occasion for reflecting on things more interior and remote. As for example; when they behold a garden, suggestions arise respecting the magnificence of its flowers, and the usefulness of its fruits, together with the delights they will promote; and with some persons such sights will lead to the contemplation of paradisiacal scenes; so that while they see the particular objects in the garden, they are but slightly attended to, in consequence

* "We may, with the greatest propriety, deny to the mechanical philosophers and mathematicians of recent times, any authority with regard to their views of the administration of the universe; we have no reason whatever to expect from their speculations any help, when we ascend to the First Cause and Supreme Ruler of the universe. But we might perhaps go farther, and assert that they are in some respects less likely than men employed in other pursuits, towards such a subject of speculation." — Rev. Wm. Whewell, *Bridgewater Treatise*, p. 334. If this is a just view of the state of merely worldly minds in reference to speculations connected with the evidences which prove a First Cause, how much more so is it in reference to the seeing spiritual truths in the historicals of the Word!

of those sublime sentiments which are engaging their attention. So is it with the historical relations of the Word, among those who can recognize the celestial and spiritual teachings which they suggest. The literal statements are attended to, simply as media for representing, and thus for opening out, a course of spiritual thought.

The historical is the most ancient form in which a written Revelation has been embodied. This appears from the existence of "the book of the generations of Adam;"* and "the book of the Wars of Jehovah," fragments from both of which are inserted in our present Scriptures. To what extent natural or worldly events were recorded in those documents, we have not the means of knowing. But factitious history appears to have been the principal feature of the earliest Revelation now extant. Of this, the first few chapters of the book of Genesis are at once an example and remains. (See the Author's *Antediluvian History*.) It was customary among the ancients, when speaking or writing with the view of instruction, to frame their discourse so as to resemble a history. This fact is the origin of fabulous writing, and of all those mythological stories which are associated with the commencement of most nations. There can be no doubt that those curious relations still extant respecting the foundations of Athens, Greece, and Rome, were originally intended to convey some truth; they being some of the remarkable forms of history in which certain truths were anciently expressed. As there can be no question respecting the fact of factitious history having been written among the ancients, to subserve, according to their genius, the purposes of mental instruction, it surely cannot be difficult to perceive that real occurrences may be selected, and so recorded under the Divine Providence, that they may represent the principles of spiritual thought and action. The miracles were actual events, and every one acknowledges, howsoever individuals might have been benefited by those mentioned in the New Testament, that they were recorded for the purpose of indicating a much wider range of the Divine munificence. The strikingly symbolical character of some of those miracles is pointed out in a preceding chapter on that subject; and hence it is plain, that historical facts have been so written as to become the representatives of spiritual things. It is generally acknowledged that the journey of the

* "If there had been merely a traditionary recollection of "the generations of Adam," preserved only by transmission from one memory to another, for more than a thousand years, the term *book* would have been most inapplicable, and could not have been used; and to suppose that a written document is referred to, cannot be deemed as forcing the construction of the Word." — Kitto's *Oyc. Bib. Lit. Art. Writing*.

Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, was a figure of the progress of the Christian from a state of sensual bondage to a condition of spiritual liberty; and surely, if this were the general object of that history, then all its particular details must have been significant of spiritual points in that important process. We cannot admit the general idea, and consistently deny this particular conclusion.

Besides, we find in the Scriptures several circumstances which were commanded to be done, for the sole purpose of representing events that were in the process of being accomplished.* Thus, Jeremiah was directed to "get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests, and go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom;" and after proclaiming the Word of the Lord, he was to break the bottle in the sight of the men that were with him, and say, "thus saith the Lord of Hosts, even so will I break this people and this city." (Jer. xix. 2, 11.) Although those circumstances were historical symbols of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state, yet they must have had reference also to the disruption of the Church which had been established in Judea, and consequently, to those corrupted principles by which that calamity was occasioned. Again, Isaiah was enjoined to loose the sackcloth from his loins, to put the shoes from off his feet, and walk naked and barefoot for a *sign* and a wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia, and thus an historical transaction was provided for the express purpose of becoming a sign. (Isaiah xx. 2, 3.) Viewed externally, it was a symbol of the distress which was about to overtake the Egyptians and the inhabitants of Cush; but considered internally, it was a sign to the Church respecting the destruction which the disobedience of its people was bringing upon its faith and virtue. Ezekiel likewise, was commanded to prepare stuff for removing by day in the sight of a rebellious house, and to go forth in their sight as they that go forth into captivity; to dig through the wall, and carry out thereby upon his shoulders; to cover his face, and not to see the ground; that these things might be a sign unto the house of Israel. (Ezekiel xii. 3-11.) Here also, we have another historical event especially provided for a representative purpose; and although its natural reference seems to have been to the captivity which was

* "There is in the Scriptures, what may be called the *instituted allegory*; because it consisted of actions which God appointed to be performed with such and such circumstances, for the purpose of prefiguring future persons and events. Many of the extraordinary things done by the prophets, at the command of God, were types; as is evident from the explications with which they were accompanied." — Dr. Macknight, Essay v. *On the Covenant which God made with Abraham, prefixed to his Translation of the Epistle to the Galatians.*

about to be experienced by the prince in Jerusalem, and the inhabitants that were with him, yet it was a sign of the people's departing from the spiritual things of the Church, and of the mental and moral bondage which would thence ensue. The last supper, was an historical act commonly allowed to have been representative,* so also is the transaction of the Lord washing his disciples' feet.† The former, as is well known, was designed to signify the Lord's communication, and man's reception, of interior goodness and truth; and the latter, to represent the Lord's purification of the lowest things of the natural mind, in order that it might be properly prepared to have a part with him.

Many other instances could be cited, in which historical transactions were unquestionably provided for the purpose of being signs and representations of spiritual things;‡ but these are sufficient; they aid our argument in showing that all the historical portions of the Word must have been selected and written with the same design. It is impossible, satisfactorily to account for the children of Israel having been a chosen people upon any other principle. Although it is written that they were a holy people, and that the Lord had chosen them unto Himself, above all people that were upon the face of the earth, (Deut. vii. 6,) it is plain from the history which is given respecting them, that those statements ought to be understood only in a representative sense. For how can *they* be said to be a "holy people," who were guilty of so many transgressions, and of whose criminal behavior both Moses and the prophets have given so fearful a description; and to whom it was expressly said, "understand that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people." (Deut. ix. 6.) Thus, one passage calls them a "holy people," while another pronounces them "a stiff-necked people." Both statements cannot be genuinely true. Their whole history and

* Matt. xxvi. 19-28. "The supper of the Lord is a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another."—*Art. of Rel.* xxviii.

† John xiii. 5-10. "Christ washed his disciples feet that he might signify to them spiritual washing, and the cleansing of the soul from the pollutions of sin."—*Henry and Scott's Commentary.*

‡ See Jeremiah xiii. 1-7; xvi. 2, 5, 8; Ezekiel iv. 1-15; v. 1-4; 1 Kings xxii. 11; xx. 35-38; Hosca i. 2-9; iii. 1, 2. It is however, the opinion of some, that many of those acts took place only in the minds of the prophets, and that they were parts of their visions or ecstatic states. This view was held by *Calvin*, and it is advocated by *Hengstenberg*. We see no necessity for the adoption of such an opinion; and we have mentioned it, only to show that distinguished persons in the professing Church having considered historical relations as referring to internal states, not to external facts.—*Kitto's Cyc. Bib. Lit. Art. Prophecy.*

final rejection, at the advent of the Lord, prove the latter to be the correct description of their character; and therefore, the former can only be predicated of them in a representative sense. As they were holy only in a representative sense, it is certain that they can be said to be chosen in no other sense. That they were not selected to receive blessings and salvation in preference to every other portion of our race, seems evident.* These are results which depend on the observance of conditions. This is the general tenor of all the Divine teachings. The conditions are chosen by God, but men must also choose them if they would secure the promises: all who do this, are doubtless saved—saved, because they have chosen to observe what God has chosen to require as the condition of salvation. This being a common law, is applicable to all people. The Divine choice then, in reference to the Jewish nation, must have some other meaning. And when we remember the common admission, that they were formed into the representation of a Church; that they had instituted among them a typical worship; it seems evident that they were chosen, because they were a peculiar people—peculiar for a genius which, as being possessed by “the fewest of all people,” (Deut. vii. 7,) would, in the process of being developed, in connection with the influence of supernatural interferences, afford those historical materials which should be the fit representations of spiritual things.

History has been selected as one of the forms in which to represent things of a spiritual nature, because of its adaptation to interest the people of whom it peculiarly treats, and thus to lead them to care for its safety and continuance. There is a sort of national and personal interest in the preservation of historical records. There is no more effectual method for the destruction of national sympathies than that of obliterating historical documents and associations. People cling with great pertinacity to their history, and this contributes to its safety and duration. The consciousness of what is described having once been a reality, causes such narratives to live when other species of composition would perish. This, then, is one reason, among others, why Revelation has been presented in an historical dress. It was the most suitable form in which to embody and preserve spiritual

* Dr. Watson considers that they were chosen to set before the world the doctrine and worship of one only God, and observes that for more than twenty-three centuries witnessed the unity of God, and his abomination of idolatry.—*Apology for the Bible*, Letter iv. This coincides with our view of the case. It was however, the peculiarity of their genius which fitted them for the reception and perpetuation of those communications respecting God, and which contributed the more effectually to separate them from all other nations of the earth, which at that time had sunk into absolute idolatry.

information for the use of the Church, after men had sunk into that sensual condition, which was so peculiarly prevalent when this form of expressing Divine Revelation was first adopted. Hence also it is, that the prophetic writings are so figuratively interspersed with references to historical transactions. Another reason why history has been selected as the vehicle of Revelation is, "that children and boys may be initiated thereby into the reading of the Word; for the historical parts are delightful, and gain a place in the minds of young people, whereby communication is thus given with the heavens, which communication is grateful, because they are in a state of innocence, and mutual charity." (*Arcana Cœlestia*, 6333.)

Unless the historical portions of the Word are viewed as possessing a spiritual sense, it will not be easy for any person, who will think with freedom and discernment, to see how they could be inspired compositions, and consequently, Revelations from God. Such persons cannot but feel great difficulty in their attempts, to reconcile a large number of Bible histories with the fact of their being inspired. What can they make of the revolting affair of Lot and his daughters; (Gen. xix. ;) of the curious device of Jacob, to procure from the flock a streaked and spotted progeny; (Gen. xxx. 37 to end ;) of the prevarications of Abraham and Isaac, both of whom informed Abimelech that their wives were their sisters; (Abraham having previously made the same statement to Pharaoh; Gen. xii, xx, and xxvi ;) and of many other circumstances recorded by Moses, and in the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and the Kings? Is it not evident that the Divine Word cannot possibly treat of mere men, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their posterity, which constituted so ungrateful a nation? Neither can it treat merely of their judges, and kings, their wives and concubines, their sons and daughters, their wars and rapines, and the like; for these subjects, considered in themselves, are not worthy to be mentioned in God's Word, unless it were for the purpose of representing and signifying things of a spiritual nature. Every one must see that it would have been of very little consequence whether many of those circumstances, mentioned in the Word, were related or not, if they had not been prepared for this purpose. The conclusion therefore, that they were all written to be the vehicles of spiritual teaching, seems irresistible.

There is another argument which forcibly contributes to this conclusion. The historicals of the Word do not relate all the circumstances which transpired in the various countries of which they treat. It is not, it never has been pretended that those documents contain the whole history of the Israelitish people; doubtless very much occurred with that nation which is not men-

tioned in the Scriptures. It is also to be observed, that from the time of Samuel to the Babylonian exile, the prophets were very conspicuous in all the leading events which transpired, and yet none of their written documents, either historical or otherwise, from the time of Samuel to eight hundred years before the advent of the Lord, form any portion of the Word. Why was this? Certainly, because the circumstances omitted were not adapted to represent those spiritual sentiments which were contemplated by the Divine mind. Only those events which are recorded, were selected, because they were adequate to subserve this purpose; and all are so related as to carry out this design. Hence, some are related partially, some incompletely, and a few, with the introduction of factitious statements;* the primary object in all cases being the conveyance of spiritual ideas by means of appropriate representations, and not, the production of complete and absolute histories of human procedure, and worldly occurrences.

The partial relations, *i. e.*, the relation of events with a particular bias, and the incompleteness of others, present no formidable difficulty to the ingenuous inquirer. It is not so, however, with those relations in which there is a deviation from historical correctness. It is easy to see that partial, and incomplete narratives, *i. e.*, narratives written so elliptically as to leave in obscurity the literal facts to which they refer,† might have been adopted for the spiritual purposes under our contemplation; but the reason why there should have been a departure from historical accuracy, is not so obvious. And yet a moment's reflection, if made under the recollection that factitious history, and para-

* The facts here referred to have long been known. Bishop Watson admits, that "the history of the Old Testament has without doubt some difficulties in it;" (*Apology for the Bible*, Letter v.,) and he cites Dr. Law, as saying that there are "occurrences related, in which the historian's own natural qualifications were sufficient to enable him to relate things with all the accuracy required;" and St. Austin, as stating that "those men, to whom the Holy Ghost revealed what ought to be received as authoritative in religion, might write some things as men with historical diligence, and other things as prophets by Divine inspiration." Thus it is attempted to account for those difficulties, on the ground of their being the results of human fallibility; and consequently that there are things in the Scriptures which were not produced by inspiration, but by the "natural qualifications" of men "with historical diligence," who, therefore, might have made mistakes. We are not of this opinion. The difficulties can be met on higher and better grounds.

† A remarkable instance of this is afforded in the history of the circumstances connected with Jephthah's vow; which is so written as to have prevented commentators from deciding whether his daughter was put to death or not. Judges xi. 31. See Noble's *Plenary Inspiration*, 482, and "Appendix" No. vi. Another case is afforded by the undecided state of the question, whether it was really Samuel who appeared to Saul, on the incantations of the woman of Endor. 1 Sam. xxviii.

bles constructed upon historical transactions, have been employed as mediums for the indication of spiritual things to men, will suggest the necessity of an occasional deviation from historical facts, when those facts were not *wholly* suited to the Divine purpose; and also, the necessity of substituting other intimations, when that purpose absolutely required them. That which has been considered in their production was their spiritual, and not their literal purport. Cases of this kind are few and inconspicuous; but as they do occur, and are among the peculiarities of the Word, we will cite some instances, and give their explanation, with a view to illustrate the position above contended for.

First. It is written, "now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." (Exodus xii. 40, 41.) Dr. Clarke says the statements in these verses are extremely difficult; and Dr. Kennicott asserts "that the descendants of Israel did not dwell four hundred and thirty years in Egypt may be easily proved, and has often been demonstrated." (For a demonstration see *A. C.* 7985.) Indeed, a chronological examination of the subject, shows that from the time of Jacob's journey down to Egypt, to the period of the departure thence of his descendants, was only about one half of the above period. To make out four hundred and thirty years, it is requisite to commence the reckoning from the time when Abraham first dwelt in that country; and this is the calculation usually adopted to explain the above passage;* but this reckoning is certainly not included in the statement of the text, which is very precise, even to noticing that the departure was upon the selfsame day on which the four hundred and thirty years terminated. It is also to be observed, that the chronology which makes out that period from the time of Abraham's entrance into Egypt, to the commencement of the exodus, is founded on more than one *conjec-*

* Dr. Clarke, (see his *Commentary*), thinks this to be the true sense, and considers that the clauses which express it have been "lost out of the present copies of the Hebrew text." In proof of this he adduces the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, and the *Alexandrian* copy of the Septuagint, which state the circumstances thus, "*now the sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan, and in the land of Egypt, was 430 years.*" We cannot receive this as any proof of the supposition that the two clauses here given in the Roman character, have been lost out of the Hebrew text. Both of those versions are translated from the original Hebrew; and it is much more likely that the translators, when discovering the difficulty of the text, should have inserted those two clauses by way of explanation, than that they should have been lost out of copies of the Hebrew Scriptures, the integrity of which has been guarded with so much human scrupulosity and Divine care.

ture. Moses descended from Kohath and Amram; Amram being his father. (Exodus vi. 18, 21.) We are not informed how old Kohath was, when Amram was born; nor how old Amram was, when Moses was born; these particulars, which are requisite for the determination of an accurate chronology respecting the point before us, have been supplied by conjecture, and therefore, absolute certainty concerning it, is not to be attained. (Hindmarsh's *Letter to Dr. Priestley*, p. 160.) Moreover, it was said to Abraham in reference to this bondage, "Know of a surety, that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years." (Gen. xv. 13.) This prophetic passage gives the years thirty short of those mentioned in the historical one. It also demonstrates that Abraham's sojourn in Egypt was not intended to be reckoned in the time spoken of, because it is distinctly spoken, not of him, but of his seed. From these circumstances, it is plain that the statement of the sons of Israel having been four hundred and thirty years in Egypt, is a deviation from the strictness of historical accuracy. To allow that some statements have been lost out of the original Hebrew; or to suppose that some error has crept into it; is, either to admit that the Scriptures have become uncertain documents; or, that the Divine watchfulness over the preservation of their integrity, has not been sufficient for the purpose. Now which is the wisest course, to open the door for the admission of such dangerous consequences, or to concede, that the number four hundred and thirty was employed for the sake of conveying some spiritual fact?

It cannot be doubted that the Scriptures do occasionally employ numbers in some sense other than their numerical value. "*Mene*," that is, "God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it;" which was miraculously written upon the wall of the palace of Belshazzar, is one case; (Dan. v. 26;) and that of the number six hundred threescore and six, which is said to be the number of the beast, and the number of a man, is another. (Rev. xiii. 18.) The number of the tribes which were sealed, and the measurements of the New Jerusalem are other instances. (Rev. vi. xxi.) The tithe or tenth, which was provided for the Levitical priesthood, and the ten words, which expressed the specific commands of God, were not arbitrary or accidental numbers. Nor were the twelve tribes, and twelve apostles; nor the forty days' rain, which inundated the earth; the forty days' fasting of Moses in the mount; the forty years which were passed in the wilderness; the forty years' reign of David, and Solomon, and Jehoshaphat; the forty days' temptation of Jesus, with many

other circumstances which could be cited.* The numbers three and seven have always been understood to imply something that is complete and holy; and it is well known that some recondite views on this subject were held by the ancients.

The Pythagorean doctrine of numbers, which some have considered to be the same as Plato's doctrine of ideas,† notwithstanding the obscurity with which it is surrounded at this day, certainly shows that numbers were understood to indicate something more than numerical value. And we have no doubt that Pythagoras, and his followers, obtained their views on the subject from some traditionary and imperfect remains of that knowledge concerning their spiritual meaning, which had prevailed in the ancient church, and which was spread abroad in various parts of the East, after the disruption at Babel. The universal recognition of the number *three*, having relation to sacred things, must have been derived from some common origin; and what that was, this view at once supplies. We find this number as an arcanum in all the philosophical schools of antiquity, and Aristotle observes respecting it, that "we have taken this number from nature, and the observation of her laws, and we make use of it in the sacrifices of the gods, and other purifications." (Cited by Dr. Cudworth, in his *Int. Sys.* vol. ii. p. 313.) It seems therefore plain, that the numbers employed in Revelation are designed to indicate qualities respecting the states of those who are treated of, rather than the quantities of things to which they are prefixed. Hence, the sons of Israel are said to have been four hundred and thirty years in Egypt, because, by the sons of Israel in Egypt is denoted the spiritual church in bondage, — this bondage arises from the infestation of false and evil principles; and the completeness of the vastation which they effected, is denoted by the number four hundred and thirty; (See *Arcana Cœlestia*, 2959, 7985–6;) four hundred, denoting vastation in general, when associated with disastrous subjects; (hence, the prophets of the groves, which ate at Jezebel's table, were four hundred; (1 Kings xviii. 19;) and Jehoshaphat brake down four hundred cubits of the wall of Jerusalem, and carried away the gold and the silver that were found in the House of the Lord;) (2 Kings xiv. 13;) and thirty signifying what is complete,

* For these facts see Leviticus xxvii. 3; Exodus xxxiv. 28; Gen. xlix. 28; Matt. x. 2; Gen. vii. 4; Ex. xxiv. 18; Num. xiv. 33; 2 Sam. v. 4; 1 Kings xi. 42; 2 Kings xii. 1; Matt. iv. 2.

† This is Dr. Cudworth's opinion. He says that the Pythagorean doctrine of all things being made out of numbers, simply means that all things were made from ideas of the Divine intellect, and that those things are considered to have a relation to number, because they were derived from a monad or unity. — *Int. Sys.*, vol. ii, pp. 41, 42.

(therefore, the height of the ark, and the height of the House of the Lord, were *thirty* cubits; Gen. vi. 15; 1 Kings vi. 2; the Lord was about thirty years old at the time of His baptism, and He was betrayed for thirty pieces of silver: Luke iii. 23; Matt. xxvi. 15:) it was predicted to Abraham, that this servitude should be four hundred, to denote that vastation would be experienced, but it is afterwards described to have been four hundred and thirty, to signify the completeness with which it had been realized.

Secondly. Another case in which the letter of the Scriptures deviates somewhat from the strictness of historical accuracy for the sake of the spiritual sense, is afforded by the narrative which, treating of Jesus having been sent into Egypt, that he might escape the slaughter intended for the innocents, says, he "was there until the death of Herod; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My son." (Matt. ii. 15.) Now, the prediction here referred to is this, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." (Hosea xi. 1.) That "My son," here means the Israelitish people, is evident from its being written elsewhere, "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is My son, even My first born," (Exodus iv. 22,) so that that which is said to have been a prophecy respecting the Lord's coming out of Egypt, is, in fact, a reference to the history of the Israelites in that country, and to their deliverance therefrom. Nor can it, by any ingenuity, be made *literally* to refer to any other event. It is usual to meet this difficulty by considering, either that the prophet is cited only in the way of accommodation, and as affording some illustration of the event to which it is applied; or that the sentence, "out of Egypt have I called my son," was a proverb founded on the deliverance of the Israelites; and that as intended to express any signal deliverance, it was applicable to the case of Jesus. This seems to us to leave the difficulty precisely where it was; and other grounds will have to be taken for its removal. Although Matthew's citation of the prophecy has no literal significance, it must have a spiritual relevancy. What this is will presently appear.

Jesus was in Egypt and so was Israel, each was brought out therefrom, and both are called by God, His son; so that there is a kind of parallel between the two histories, and so far, that respecting Israel, (because a representative history,) may with propriety be said to be a prefiguration of that respecting Jesus. Under this view, the latter event really did receive a fulfilment in that which was indicated by the former, and thus the apparent inaccuracy of Matthew's reference to the prophet's history, is

considerably diminished. Still this is owing to a representative and not a literal view of the two events.

But more than a simple parallel is intended by those passages. Egypt, in both of them, was representative of the scientific things of the Church, which consist of its external laws, regulations, and duties. The reason is, because the ancients of that country had some knowledge of spiritual things, as is well known from those hieroglyphics, and other esoteric learning which was cultivated among them at a later period of their history. Hence, by Israel as a child in Egypt, is represented the Church in its infancy, receiving instruction in those external things which are requisite for its growth and stability in the world; and to be called out of Egypt, denotes to be elevated above the knowledges of merely scientific things, and to be gifted with a perception of those which are spiritual. "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual;" and that which is true of the Church, is also true of the Lord while in the world, from whom, during that period, the Christian church was derived.

Now how could those circumstances be fulfilled by Jesus going into Egypt when He was a child, and His call therefrom? We can see no answer to this, but that which arises from its spiritual sense; the Lord's history in the world was representative like all the rest. The infancy of Jesus denoted the innocence of His Divine goodness; His retirement into Egypt signified His introduction into knowledges, for He grew in wisdom; and His call from that country, represented His elevation thence into a perception of the Divine presence, for He grew in favor with God. Consequently in Him was realized, those spiritual things to which the historical circumstances spoken of Israel by the prophet, representatively referred; they were preëminently accomplished in him; being points of those typical things, the righteousness of which He came to fulfil, *i. e.*, fill full. Thus, although there is no historical relevance in the evangelist's citation, we find that it is fraught with deep significance in its inner sense; it having reference to some facts connected with the early process of the Lord's glorification.

Thirdly. Several deviations from historical accuracy have long been known by Christian scholars to exist in the genealogies of the Lord, as given by Matthew and Luke. We will only select a case from each to illustrate our position. Matthew, in tracing this genealogy, divides it into three parts of fourteen generations each. Thus he says, "so all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon, are fourteen generations;

and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ, are fourteen generations.* Now if the second of these series is examined, only thirteen generations will be found, and the name omitted is that of Jehoiakim, in whose reign Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came against Jerusalem and besieged it. (Dan. i. 1.) His father Josiah is mentioned, and so also is his son Jeconias, but Jehoiakim himself is carefully excluded. There is then an evident historical discrepancy. Now why is this? Some commentators tell us, that this name must have fallen out of the text from which our translation was made, and to prove it, they refer to the circumstance of its being found in some old manuscripts.† But we submit that this does not prove any such conclusion. The manuscripts adduced are of but little value, as to their antiquity, in such an inquiry as this; and we cannot admit that the original of our translation was a mutilated copy as the above explanation supposes. If a passage should be found in a transcription, which is not discoverable in older manuscripts, — which is really the case with the subject before us, — the conclusion to be drawn is, not that it was in some older document, but that the transcribers have inserted it to supply what they supposed to be an omission in some original. Another way of meeting this difficulty is the supposition that Jehoiakim ought to be read for Jeconias, in the eleventh verse, and counted in the first series; and that the third series should commence with Jeconias. But these suppositions require us to believe that some error had crept into the original, for which there is no ground. For it is a fact, that in very early times, this very difficulty was presented to “the fathers.” Porphyry urged it against Christianity in the third century; and it cannot be doubted that Jerome, who replied to him by suggesting the above emendation, would have produced more substantial evidence than conjecture, in support of it, if a collation of the manuscripts then extant would have supplied him with the materials. We have no doubt that our version in this instance is a correct expression of the original; and higher grounds than literal criticism will have to be taken to remove the difficulty. The reason why Jehoiakim’s name is omitted from the list, is on account of that which he

* Matt. i. 17. The carrying away into Babylon, here refers to the second captivity, for there were three. The first, in the reign of Johakim, in A. M. 3398, the second under Jeconiah, in 3405, and the third during the government of Zedekiah, in 3416.

† Calmet says, the 11th verse should read thus: “Josias begat Joakim and his brethren, and Joakim begat Jeconias.” But Dr. Campbell states, that “there is no authority from ancient MSS., translations, or commentaries, for this reading, which seems to have sprung from some over-zealous transcriber, who, finding that there were only thirteen in either the second series or the third, has thought it necessary thus to supply the defect.”

represented. All the names in the Lord's genealogy are representative of all the human states, through which He descended into the world, which He then took upon Himself, and to which His redemption was extended. But Jehoiakim was not one of these. He was a profaner in a special degree; he hated the prophecies, persecuted the prophets, and destroyed their writings by cutting and casting them into the fire; (Jer. xxvi. and xxxvi. ;) and hence he represented those who profane, in the highest degree. Such are those who speak against the Holy Ghost, concerning whom it is written, they "shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matt. xii. 32.) The Lord, then, did not take upon Himself the redemption of these; there is no redemption for them; * and to indicate this fact Jehoiakim, by whom they are represented, is omitted from the list.

It doubtless must have appeared as a singular coincidence, that three of the most conspicuous points in Scripturéd history, from the time of Abraham to the advent of the Lord, should each have transpired at the end of the fourteenth generation. We have just noticed one case in which this is not literally correct; and Jerome, whom no one will suspect of having been disposed to raise objections to the accuracy of those narrations, mentions another. He says, on the text, "and Joram begat Ozias," (verse 8,) that "in the fourth book of Kings (*i. e.*, the second book) we read that Ochozias was the son of Joram. On his death, Josebeth, sister of Ochozias and daughter of Joram, took Joash, her brother's son, and preserved him from the slaughter of the royal seed by Athalias. To Joash succeeded his son Amasias; after him his son Azarias, who is called Ozias; after him his son Joatham. Thus you see, according to historical truth, there were three intervening kings, who are omitted by the evangelist. Joram, moreover, begat not Ozias, but Ochozias, and the rest as we have related." † This then shows, that the generations from Abraham to David were really seventeen. We stop not now to inquire into the causes why Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, were omitted; it was, in all probability, for some such reasons as those which excluded Jehoiakim.‡ Our

* "Our Savior did not take any evils upon him, as ours, but those which, according to Divine order, He could overcome, and thus, also give us power to overcome, as we sincerely supplicate his Divine Human aid. This cannot be done with the evil of profanation, when it has attained its fulness. The evils of this degree cannot be reduced to order, because the man who has thus sunk in his spirit, lies down irremediless in hell." *Exposition of Daniel*, by Rev. M. Sibley, p. 3.

† *Commentary on the Four Gospels*, collected out of the works of the Fathers by St. Thomas Aquinas.

‡ Consult the history of these kings. *Ahaziah* walked after the example of Ahab, and worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth; *Joash* became an idolater, and

point is this; the evangelist states that both the first and second series were fourteen generations, whereas the former consisted of *seventeen*; and in the latter only *thirteen* are enumerated. Something similar is observable in the third tessarodecade, into which we need not enter. These facts are admitted upon all hands; it therefore follows, on the assumption of the evangelist being inspired to write what he did, and also that what he has written is inspired,* that the literal sense of the Word intended to embody Revelation, sometimes diverges from historical accuracy, for the sake of adopting other materials, more suitable for the representation of a spiritual sense; this sense, and not the historical, being the primary object of Divine writing in all cases.

Jerome, in continuation of the passage above cited, remarks, with a view to obviate the difficulties to which he adverts, that "it was the purpose of the evangelist to make each of the three periods consist of fourteen generations." Certainly, but he does not tell us why. The reason however is, because, by that number is signified the holiness of that to which it is applied; it is formed by the duplication of *seven*, and that number, it is well known, is commonly employed in the Scriptures with this meaning. Hence the seventh day, the sabbatical year, the seven branches of the golden candlestick, the seven churches, the seven angels, the seven spirits, the seven stars, &c., &c. Now this number when multiplied into itself, and making forty-nine, which in years, is the year of jubilee; and when doubled, to make fourteen, as in the case of the lambs that were to be offered for a burnt offering, the cities of Judah, the feast of Solomon, the genealogical enumeration of Matthew, and many others, — does not lose its signification by being squared or doubled, but it expresses the same thing in a superior degree.

And by "generations," to which this number is applied in reference to the Lord's becoming manifest in the flesh, is not only meant the physical line by which His outward body had come into the world, but also those interior existences of holy love and faith, through which the Divine descended into the

caused Zechariah the priest to be stoned to death, between the porch and the altar; and *Amaziah*, after carrying off the idols of the Edomites, became their worshipper, and never returned unto the Lord. Do not these facts, in some measure, sustain the probability above suggested?

* The usual mode of examining those points, overlooks this fact; thus Dr. Lightfoot says, that "Matthew took the last fourteen generations of this genealogy, and Luke the first forty names of his, from the genealogical rolls, at that time well known, and laid up in the public *keimelia*, (repositories,) and in private also." See *Hore Talmudice*. If this be correct, those documents of Matthew and Luke were not derived from the teachings of the Holy Spirit, but from some common records.

spiritualities and naturalisms of humanity ; those interior existences being represented by the series of persons whose names are enumerated. "It was customary with the most ancient people to give names, and by names to signify things, and thus to institute a genealogy ; for whatever has relation to the Church, may be considered in such a genealogical view ; one thing is conceived and born of another, in the way of generation ; and therefore it is common in the Word, when treating of such things as regard the Church, to speak of conceptions, births, offsprings," &c., &c. (*Arcana Cœlestia*).

The fourteen generations in the *first* division, refer to the holiness of love and wisdom in the *celestial degree*, and thus, to their existence in the highest heaven, through which the Lord passed in the process of his coming into the world. The *second* division represents the holiness of goodness and truth in the *spiritual degree*, and thus their presence in the middle heaven, through which the Lord passed in the process of His advent. And the *third* division has reference to the holiness of charity and faith in the *natural degree*, and thus to their characteristics in the ultimate heaven, through which He also passed in order to effect His incarnation in the world. Thus, each division of the fourteen generations denoted a holiness in those distinct degrees of interior things, through which the Lord descended : and there were three of them to represent the perfection of the work. That there are three heavens is plainly taught by the apostle, who says that he knew a man who was caught up into the third ; (2 Cor. xii. 2 ;) and that the Lord must have passed through them, in the course of his descent into the world, is evident from this, that He, in Himself, is "high above all the heavens," and yet He said, "I came down from heaven," (John vi. 38,) and "am come a light into the world." (John xii. 46.) The above then, we conceive, are the subjects treated of in the internal sense of the Lord's genealogy, as given by Matthew ; and it is for the sake of their adequate representation, in conformity with the peculiar features of Divine composition, that the historicals are employed only so far as they were suitable to this purpose, and other details have been introduced to carry on the representative narrative, when actual history did not afford the requisite material for so doing.

Other instances illustrative of this position, are afforded by the genealogy recorded by Luke. He says that Cainan was the son of Arphaxad, (Luke iii. 36,) but no such fact as this appears from history. The Arphaxad mentioned by Moses, as the son of Shem, was born ten years after the flood, (Gen. xi. 10,) and no such person as Cainan is stated to have been among his descendants ; nor does there appear to be any original Hebrew

authority for its insertion.* Why then is it so stated? If it were admitted that this name had been inserted by the evangelist in mistake, surely there were many to whom, or by whom the gospel was first read, who were sufficiently acquainted with the early portions of Genesis to have pointed it out, and so to have procured its correction. But this does not appear to have been done; nor can criticism produce any evidence to favor the conjecture, that it was introduced into some copies by the negligence of transcribers. To suppose it to have been an *erratum* of Luke's, is to suppose that it was not written under the Divine guidance, which would be fatal to the idea of its inspiration. And the supposition that it was the error of some other party, is to suppose the Holy Spirit not to have been careful in the preservation of that truth which it had specially produced. The difficulties which attend the notion of its having been some unintentional error are much greater than those which regard it to have been a genuine part of the absolute original. The Divine Word regards, in all its statements, the intrinsic qualities of things, and from the principles which have been laid down for our guidance in this general inquiry, it appears that *Cainan* was a name inserted in this part of the catalogue of names, because it was required to represent the connection of that series of Divine things, which are the interior subjects of the whole narrative. Without this, the internal sense would not have had a proper representation of its absolute coherence, which is of much greater value to the genuine character of revelation than any punctilious adherence to an historical series could have been. That adherence might have been observed by the ordinary ability of a literary mind; but it would require a Divine dictate to make such a deviation from it as should be necessary to reveal a coherent series of spiritual truths.

To show what is the precise idea which the name *Cainan*, in this genealogy by Luke was intended to represent, would require that we should enter upon many considerations respecting the names which precede and follow it; but as we cannot dwell on these, a general idea on the subject must suffice.

It is to be observed that this name stands the *fourth* from Noah, (Luke iii. 36,) by whose name the list is carried back to the flood: after this, the genealogy is continued up to Adam, and the *fourth* name preceding his is also *Cainan* the son of Enos.

* It may be observed, that this name is found in the Septuagint of Genesis xi. 12, now extant. This is a Greek version of the Old Testament, made upwards of two centuries before the Christian era; but there is no evidence to show, that the copies now extant are perfect copies of the original translation; and it is highly probable that they are not so, and that the name of *Cainan* has been inserted in the above passage by some Christian transcribers on the authority of Luke. — See *Dr. Wall*.

(Luke iii. 38, and Gen. v. 9.) Thus the evangelist has introduced the name Cainan, in the list of names *after* the flood, precisely in the same order in which history enabled him to insert the same name in the list which he has given of those *before* that event. Surely this was a purpose, and not a coincidence. And the reason is, because the list of names before the flood, represented those states which prevailed with certain branches of the *Celestial Church*, (see the Author's *Antediluvian History*;) and Cainan, in that series, represented the beginning of the decline of *perception*, which state belongs to the *Celestial Church*: whereas, the list of names which is given after that catastrophe, represented those states which prevailed with certain branches of the *Spiritual Church*, and Cainan is inserted in the same order in the list which is given by Luke, to represent the beginning of the decline of *intelligence*, which belongs to the *Spiritual Church*.* Perception is of love; intelligence is of faith; the former is celestial, and it at once pronounces on that which is true or false, as "yea, yea; nay, nay;" the latter is spiritual, and acquired by instruction; and all its knowledges of truth are procured through the abstrusities of reason. This view of the subject appears to us to remove the difficulty, which the insertion of an unhistorical name has suggested, and at the same time that it maintains the truth and inspiration of the document, opens out many interior points for serious meditation.

In connection with these subjects, it is of importance to remark certain general features, by which those two genealogies are distinguished. Matthew, as it has been seen, commences the genealogy from Abraham, and brings it down to "Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called

* It is interesting to find, that those genealogies have, at various times during the history of biblical exegesis, been regarded as representing a succession of spiritual principles and sentiments, generated in the mind of the man of the Church, during the process which ends in a true faith in the Lord being born. Several instances are cited in the *Catena Aurea* of Thomas Aquinas. We will cite one from *Rabanus Maurus*, Archbishop of Mayence, A. D. 847. He says, "let us see what moral signification these names contain; after *Jeconias*, which means 'the preparation of the Lord,' follows *Salathiel*, i. e. 'God my petition,' for he who is right prepared, prays not but to God. Again he becomes *Zorobabel* 'the master of Babylon,' that is, of the men of the earth whom he makes to know concerning God, that He is their father, which is signified in *Abiud*. Then that people rise again from their vices, which follows *Eliakim* 'the resurrection;' and thence rise to good works, which is *Azor*, and become *Sadoch*, i. e., 'the righteous;' and then they are taught the love of their neighbor," &c., &c. This is adduced simply to show that a series of names has been recognized to signify a series of spiritual things; and consequently, that while the omission of a name would interrupt the series of things intended to be taught, the introduction of one which history does not supply, may have been essential to the instruction designed.

Christ" (Matt. i. 16.) But Luke traces it from Joseph up to Adam, which was the son of God. (Luke iii. 38.) Now these two narratives are popularly supposed to treat of the same event, and in their external sense they appear to do so, but this is not the case with their internal meaning. This may be evident from this consideration, that the Holy Spirit would not have dictated a reverse order of the narrations, if different subjects had not been intended to be revealed by them; nor would it in the one case, have begun it with Abraham, and in the other have carried it back to God. The genealogy of Matthew was designed to represent particulars respecting the Lord's assumption of Humanity, and its presence in the world; but the genealogy of Luke was intended to represent particulars concerning the glorification of that Humanity in the world, and its final ascent out of it: facts, which at once illustrate the circumstances of Matthew tracing His entrance into the world, and of Luke tracing His exit out of it.

It is then certain, that there are some deviations from historical accuracy observable in the Scripture narratives; but it seems equally plain that they were deliberately adopted, in order to provide materials for representing those spiritual things relating to the Church, which are at once the evidence of their inspiration, and the subjects which are revealed.

As we have had occasion to refer to the genealogy of the Lord, it may be useful, before entirely quitting that subject, to advert to one or two other questions with which it is intimately connected. This will also furnish us with some additional illustrations of the principle we are attempting to establish. The first question which presents itself is this:—why do the genealogies of the Lord's Humanity refer to Joseph, when it had no paternal connection with him? The answer is, that the chief point to be proved by those genealogies is, that the Humanity of the Lord descended through the tribe of Judah, that thus the intimations of prophecy might be fulfilled. The circumstance of other facts, proving that the Lord was the Messiah, proves that those prophecies respecting the descent of His Humanity were fully accomplished, and consequently, that Mary must have been a kinswoman of the same tribe as Joseph; and Joseph's genealogy is given, because in it Mary's is included.* This appears to have been the opinion of all antiquity. If there had been any grounds on which to question its accuracy, they doubtless would have been put forth in the first ages by the Jews,

* It was not usual to trace genealogies in the female line, though this does not appear to have been an invariable rule. In the first division of that given by Matthew, we find no less than four women inserted, namely *Thamar*, verse 3; *Rachab* and *Ruth*, ver. 5, and *Bathsheba*, ver. 6.

who might have defended their opposition by such evidence; but they did not do so. Nor did the emperor Julian, who, after his apostasy, paid particular attention to those genealogies, suggest any difficulty respecting them on this ground, though he urged others, which seem to have been satisfactorily replied to by "the Fathers."* In latter times, much learning has been employed in the attempt to show, that the genealogy by Luke is, in reality, that of Mary;† but, without trusting much to this argument, we will advert to another much more certain. There can be no doubt that Bethlehem was the place appointed for the taxing of those who were "of the house and lineage of David." Now as every one was required to repair to his own city for this taxing, and as Mary went with Joseph, up to Bethlehem for this purpose, it seems reasonable to conclude that she was there enrolled as being of the same tribe with him. (Luke ii. 1-6.)

Another circumstance to be noticed in connection with this subject, is the peculiar sentiments and laws respecting marriage, which prevailed among the descendants of Abraham. That patriarch, for instance, made his servant swear, that he would not take a wife unto his son Isaac of the daughters of the Canaanites; (Genesis xxiv. 3;) and afterwards Isaac charged Jacob, saying, "Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." (Genesis xxvii. 1.) And it subsequently became a law to the Israelitish people, that they should not make marriages with them, it being written, "Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son." (Deut. vii. 3.) It is thus evident that marriages were legal with the Jews, only so far as they were contracted within the families of their own nation. But if a woman possessed an inheritance, she was not permitted to marry out of her own tribe; thus, "Every daughter that possesseth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel, shall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father." (Numbers xxxvi. 8.) Now every thing connected with the few circumstances related of Mary's history, conspires to suggest that her position was such as required to be guided by this law. Nothing is said of the existence of her parents, nor of any brothers or sisters; she had, indeed, a cousin Elizabeth; (Luke i. 36;) but with this exception, she stood alone in the world, and made no calls on any for her subsistence; the fair inference from which is, that she was

* Thus he objects, that Matthew calls Joseph the son of Jacob, and that Luke speaks of him as the son of Heli. The reply was, "he did not know the Scriptural manner; one was his father by nature, the other by law." — *Glossa Interlinearis*, in the twelfth century. Cited in the *Golden Chain* of Thomas Aquinas.

† See Dr. Barrett's edition of a *Fragment of Matthew's Gospel*, and the articles *Genealogy* and *Mary*, in Kitto's *Cyc. Bib. Lit.*

the sole survivor of her house, and possessed an inheritance from her father. If this was so, then her marriage with Joseph is a plain proof, supposing that event to have been guided by the above law, that she was of the same tribe as her husband ; and consequently, the relation of his genealogy was, in this case, all that was required to show that the humanity of the Lord was derived from the line of Judah, though it had no paternity in Joseph. The apostle says, "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah." (Heb. vii. 14.)

But as marriage, considered in itself, has a spiritual origin, being founded in the heavenly union of truth and goodness, so the laws by which it was regulated in the representative Church, took their rise from habits which prevailed with a more ancient people, and with whom there existed the things of a purer Church. At that time, mankind were distinguished by families, houses, and tribes, and marriages were permitted to be contracted only within the limits of each respective connection. The reason of this was, that the peculiar genera and species of perception which then prevailed, might be preserved, and be derived in no other manner than according to the propagation of tempers and dispositions from parents ; for it is well known that children, and even remote descendants, inherit from their parents, not only personal resemblances, but a characteristic genius ; and it was to prevent a confusion of tempers and dispositions, and so to preserve the distinction accurate, that it was provided under the Divine auspices, that society should be so distinguished, and marriages so contracted. By those means the Church of that time was a representative of the Lord's kingdom, in which there are many mansions, the inhabitants of each being distinguished from the other, according to the differences in the state of their love and faith. Hence the command, which prohibited the Israelites from entering into marriage with other nations, was intended to teach that the goodness and truth which is cherished by the man of the Church, should not be conjoined with any evil or false principle, which those nations represented. And the law, directing that they who had an inheritance were to marry only into the tribe of their fathers, was designed to instruct us that those who are in the possession of an affection for truth, should only unite it with the genera of good from which it was derived. Thus a man who has a love for the truth of religion should practise the good of it ; and consequently, the love of every particular truth should be inviolably connected with the performance of its own particular love, in which case it is united, as in a marriage, with its own tribe. We simply notice these points, in passing, to indicate the representative purpose of those laws which exercised so considerable an influence over the history of the house of Israel.

Although, then, the above considerations respecting the genealogy of Joseph, show us that Mary also was of the house and lineage of David, and consequently, that the maternal Humanity of the Lord really was of the tribe of Judah; yet there is another question in connection with this point, asking for a solution. Why was it that the maternal Humanity of the Lord was derived from that particular tribe in preference to all the rest? A full answer to this inquiry would lead us into several extensive subjects, for the discussion of which this is not the place. We shall therefore, confine our reply to two points.

First. It was foreseen, that the tribe of Judah would sink deeper into the slough of transgression than any of the rest, a fact on which the history of this tribe is decisive. In it, there was a collection and concentration of all the evils to be found in the whole catalogue of crime. We need not go into particulars. The *maternal* Humanity of the Lord, then, was born of this tribe, because it could furnish the most complete amount of hereditary inclination, adapted to the reception of those evil influences, which had broken in upon the world from the infernal kingdom, the preponderation of which required to be removed, before the redemption and salvation of man could be accomplished. An Humanity thus distinguished could become the plane of every temptation; and because its indwelling was the Divine itself, they could all be overcome. The circumstance of this Humanity having been tempted in all respects as we are, proves the greatness of its liability thereto; which liability must have been derived from an hereditary origin; while the fact of those temptations having been without sin, *i. e.*, were never attended by a fall, equally proves the presence of that influent Divine power by which they were resisted. The Lord, then, assumed an Humanity from the tribe of Judah, because it could furnish, more extensively than any of the rest, those hereditary qualifications on which the infernal powers could fix their machinations, and in which the Divine could conquer them, and so effect the redemption of our race. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." The Lord was pleased to effect this purpose in an Humanity, because it was humanity that had to be benefited by it; * for an enemy, once wisely and thoroughly conquered, does not again return to the battle.

* "To do the work of redemption without an Humanity, was no more possible than it is for a man to subdue the Indies without transferring thither soldiers by ships; or cause trees to grow merely by heat and light, without the creation of air through which heat and light may pass, and without the creation of earth from which trees may be produced." *True Christian Religion*, 84. God, by means of his Humanity, put forth his omnipotence to subdue our foes, in like manner as a man must use his arm to do his work.

Here, then, we have what may be called a psychological reason for the historical occurrence before us; but it involves another of a more interior kind, which is the *second* point. The *maternal* Humanity, in which were concentrated those hereditary qualifications to which we have adverted, was successively removed. The principles of it having been those which only one of the fallen daughters of Adam could supply, could not be incorporated with the Divine nature. They were assumed only as media for the admission of evil spirits whence temptations come; and also, as a field in which the Divine could conquer them. The Lord, then, in effecting those conquests, put away the principles which brought them into requisition, and with the principles were removed the principitates, that is, the maternal humanity. This is the reason why there is no intimation of the Lord having called Mary His mother: she is sometimes spoken of as such, by others, but she is never pronounced to be so by His own mouth.

But the Lord, in successively removing from Himself this maternal Humanity, put forth a Divine Humanity in its stead; and that was the one in which He appeared at the transfiguration, the resurrection, and ascension; and of which the apostle speaks, as His "glorious body."

Now in the circumstance of the Lord having put forth a Divine humanity from Himself, to secure for man the conquests made in that which had been derived from the tribe of Judah, we have a reason why it is, that such glorious things are said of Judah and his tribe, (Gen. xlix. 8-12,) and why also the Lord is expressly called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. (Rev. v. 5.) The remarkable things spoken of Judah and his tribe, did not, and could not, from the nature of them, receive a worldly realization; and it must be evident that the Lord in Heaven is not called the Lion of that fraternity, from any thing conferred by them. To ascertain their meaning then, we must look beyond the mere historical record. Judah, and the history of his tribe, like the other patriarchs, and the history of their tribes, have a place in God's Word, only because they afford materials for the representation of that inner sense, which it is its chief purpose to convey to man. In the supreme sense, by Judah, was represented the Lord as to His Divine Humanity. This seems evident from the circumstance that the *maternal* Humanity, in which the Divine was so immediately ultimated, was of that tribe. It was for the sake of this representation that Judah was made the first of the tribes. Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, were, indeed, his predecessors, but Judah was the first whom Jacob blessed.* Hence, also, the tribe of Judah is first in the

* Gen. xlix. Reuben is declared to have been "unstable as water,"

enumeration of those who are sealed. (Rev. vii. 5.) Matthew also mentions Judah, as though he were the first of Jacob's sons; he passes over his three elder brothers, and says that "Jacob begat Judas and his brethren." (Matt. i. 2.) The sceptre was not to depart from Judah until Shiloh came. That Shiloh was the Messiah, the Lord, is well known; and the sceptre was not to depart from Judah until He came, because Judah and his sceptre were representatives of the Lord and His government. It was then to depart, because the representation was then to be discontinued. It is also said of Judah, that he should dwell forever; (Joel iii. 20;) and that Jehovah should "save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah;" (Zech. xii. 7;) in which passage it is plain that by Judah, the Lord is meant. Consequently, by the tribe of Judah are signified all that fraternity of holy principles, through which He successively ultimated Himself for the redemption of our race: and the Lord is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, to teach us that all the power of redemption belongs to Him.

Without reflection, it may seem strange that a man, and a tribe, whose history shows that they "dealt treacherously," and "profaned the holiness of the Lord," (Malachi ii. 11,) should have been selected to represent the highest and holiest of all things. A little consideration, however, will remove this difficulty. In representations, the personal character of the individual representing is not at all considered. The likeness of a man may be as good in clay as in marble, or in gold; it is the resemblance which is looked at and regarded, and the material employed for the purpose scarcely comes into view. The good man is not the less so, because his image may be exhibited in some base material. The representatives of the Word, indeed, are not precisely of this kind: still it serves to illustrate the idea, that excellence of character is not essential to the representation of the highest things. The men were *types*, and not *patterns*, of holy things. Hence it is, that in the Scriptures, sacred things are frequently represented by those that were not holy. This is commonly acknowledged. For instance, the sons of Israel, who were very far from being a spiritually-minded people, are generally considered in the Church to have been representative of holy spiritual things; beasts likewise, such as the lamb, are well known to have represented the Lord; and inanimate objects, like the altar, the lamps, the bread, the wine, and many others, are always regarded as the types of sacred things. The circumstance then

verse 4; and Simcon and Levi to have been "instruments of cruelty," verse 5. Hence those three were set aside as "cursed."

of Judah, and his tribe, having been an abandoned race, does not at all interfere with the facts of their having sustained representations of the highest order.

Taking it for granted then, that Judah represented the Lord, and that the tribe of Judah represented a series of principles, such as love, wisdom, order, and use, which flow from the Lord into human minds, to constitute media for His intellectual presence in the world, it is easy to see, that the Lord was born of that tribe, to represent that he can come into human minds, and there be intellectually manifest, only as there are in those minds, orderly principles through which he can descend. Thus the Lord was born into the world to represent his birth into human minds; and he was born of the tribe of Judah, to show that he can come into human minds through no other than a paternity of holy principles. As this is a fact, on what principle can any one deny the grounds from which it is educed? It seems evident that the historical event is associated with a spiritual significancy, and this must be the case with every other narrative which has been written under a supernatural direction.

This might be confirmed by numerous illustrations, but we will only advert to another—one which underlies the whole history of the Israelitish people,—and thus show, that from its commencement, something spiritual was intended to be expressed by it. It is said that “the Lord made a covenant with Abraham,” and that it should be an “everlasting covenant.” (Gen. xv. 18; xvii. 2–8. Covenants were also established with Isaac and Jacob, Gen. xvii. 21; Ex. ii. 24.) Now it is obvious that those statements are not to be understood in any ordinary sense. A covenant is literally a coming together,—an agreement between two parties who are of the same mind with regard to some object. Can this idea be predicated of God and man? Man is described as a fallen creature, and that “every imagination of his heart is evil, and that continually.” Neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob was exempt from this condition. How then could the Divine make a covenant with such persons? How could the infinite come to the finite, the pure come to the impure, so as to make an agreement with it? It seems contrary to the Divine nature, and doubtless is so. Moreover, how could an everlasting covenant have been established with parties who only had a temporary existence in the world? Such a notion is not intelligible. We must then seek some other explanation of the matter. It is to be observed, that in the establishment of those covenants, the patriarchs were not consulted, nor was their consent obtained. Those covenants are distinctly stated to have been the Lord’s only: the language is, “Behold I establish my covenant with you.” Now God’s covenants, that is, the conditions of his covenants with men, are, that they should receive

the principles of his love and truth into their hearts and minds. Without this reception, it is not possible that any such conjunction should exist ; and as man has nothing of himself whereby to secure it, it is plain, that whensoever it exists, it is in consequence of the presence of some principles in man, which are in agreement with certain principles in God. So that in tracing God's covenant with man to its inmost ground, it is found to be a spiritual conjunction of God with those things in man which are really from Himself. If the patriarchs possessed those principles, of course they were conjoined to God, and in that case the covenants may have been everlasting, for death does not dissolve them. Still this only makes it a personal matter, and a similar result may be secured by all who will comply with the requisite conditions. It does not, by any means, make it peculiar to them, and this is the very point of the history ; it was their privilege. In what light then is this circumstance to be considered. We must not lose sight of the fact, that " God is no respecter of persons," and we should always remember that he is a lover of principles. There is very little recorded of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, to indicate that they possessed any peculiar sanctity, or religious intelligence. Their history indeed points out many instances of great deficiency in those particulars. And as it is plain that the covenants said to have been established with them, were not established for the sake of their private spiritual characters, but for the public purposes of Revelation, we are compelled to regard them as representative personages ; and it is only in this light that the Divine can be said to have made a covenant with them. By Abraham is represented *celestial love*, which is love to the Lord ; by Isaac is denoted *spiritual love*, which is love to the neighbor ; and by Jacob is signified *natural love*, influenced by the former in the performance of use ; and it is because these are heavenly loves, in their respective order, that the three patriarchs are said to be in heaven. (Matt. viii. 11.) Under this view of the case, the whole embarrassment respecting the establishment of a covenant with them as men, is at once removed. We see that it was not written of their *personal* but of their *representative* characters ; and it is instantly perceived that a covenant, a really spiritual conjunction, does exist between the above loves and God ; and consequently, between Him and all those by whom they are affectionately cherished. We thus learn the spiritual fact intended to be revealed by this remarkable history. And as the establishment of covenants with the patriarchs lies at the foundation of all the Israelitish history, the conclusion is unavoidable that that history is, in every particular, representative of spiritual things, pertaining to the Church and to the life to come.

CHAPTER XII.

PROPHECY: ITS FULFILMENT TO BE SOUGHT FOR IN THE INTERNAL STATES OF THE CHURCH, RATHER THAN IN THE EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE WORLD.

ARGUMENT.—The fulfilment of Prophecy commonly sought for in external circumstances. Difficulties attend this view of the case. A knowledge of the signification of Prophecy, important to the existence of an intelligent church. Definition of the term. Man, of himself, can know nothing of the future. God alone can make a revelation of its events. The prediction respecting the birth of Immanuel, and that recorded in the eleventh chapter of Daniel, considered. The common political explanation of it unsatisfactory. We are not to conclude, because some Prophecies may have received a fulfilment in some circumstances of history, that they have no other meaning. Some Prophecies may have been frequently fulfilled in external events. Illustrations. The reason why some Prophecies have received an external fulfilment, though they primarily treated of spiritual things. The literal sense of Prophecy commonly obscure. The canon invented for its interpretation vague and unsatisfactory. The Prophecies specially designed for some external realization, have that realization recorded in the Scriptures. Instances cited. No person, without the aid of inspiration, can know that a certain fact in history is the fulfilment of some specific Prophecy. The Prophecies, the precise terms of which were specially realized in external events, were those which the Lord delivered respecting Himself. Cases adduced. They, nevertheless, have a spiritual application to man. Prophecies not thrown into desuetude by particular fulfillments. If they had been intended to point to external events, there would have been no necessity for expressing them in figurative language. The prophetic blessings of Jacob on his sons wholly symbolical. That which it is stated should befall them in the last days, did not take place. The order in which the tribes are frequently mentioned, not the same; the reason for this. A summary exposition of the meaning of Jacob's predictions. The predictions of Moses respecting the sons of Israel. The prediction concerning the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head. Without a spiritual application of Prophecy to man, it would admit only of private interpretation. A prediction cited which is understood to treat of the restoration of the Jews to Canaan. The mistakes which prevail on that subject, and a spiritual exposition of the passage. The admission that some predictions treat of the future glory of the Church in the world, considered. One of such predictions cited, and its meaning explained. That meaning not yet realized. The general state of the Church at this day. The predictions commonly understood to mean the end of a wicked world, denote the end of a corrupted Church. The statement concerning the second coming of the Lord, a prophecy respecting the discovery of the spiritual sense of the Scriptures.

THE prophetical statements of the Word, are the next peculiarity of it which claims our attention. Much anxious labor and learned ability; much historical research, and ingenious conjecture, have been employed in the interpretation of this portion of the Scriptures. Although these efforts may, in some cases, have resulted in the discovery of certain external circumstances,

which possess general resemblances to the requirements of the prediction, and therefore may, without inconvenience to its higher truth, be regarded as its fulfilment; yet it must be confessed, that there is a large amount of prophecy, on the natural meaning of which there prevails no unanimity of sentiment that the scholar can recognize, or the Church can sanction. The fulfilment of many prophecies has been sought for chiefly in worldly occurrences, to which, from the figurative terms employed, we think it impossible they should relate. The interpretation has been adopted more from some supposed resemblance between the events and predictions, than by the recognition of any uniform principle by which to decipher the language of Revelation; and hence the conclusions arrived at are, in numerous cases, mere speculations and uncertainties.* This is a state of things which ought not to be attributed to any portion of the Word, and the Church in which they exist must necessarily be defective and unsettled.

The general confession that the prophecies are Divine communications, and the particular acknowledgment that the signification of many of them is either uncertain or unknown, do not seem consistent with each other; for with what reason can a statement be said to be Divine, if, at the same time, there is not a comprehension of its meaning? By what criteria, satisfactory to an enlightened judgment, can the former be acknowledged in the absence of the latter? It may be replied, that such prophecies are believed to be Divine, because they were written by parties, some of whose predictions are understood: but is not this a faith in authority, and not in the truth of the things referred to by it? The circumstance of a man's writing a truth to-day, is no guaranty for the accuracy of that which he may indite to-morrow. It is truth which we are required to believe; and no authority can make that true which is not so. To say that we believe that God has spoken, and then to say that we know not the meaning of his utterances, belongs rather to a paradox of words, than to a reality of things. A knowledge of the signification of prophecy is of serious importance — we think

* The Rev. Geo. Richards, M. A., in his Bampton sermons, entitled the *Divine Origin of Prophecy Illustrated and Defended*, speaking of Zephaniah's prediction, respecting the destruction of Nineveh, (Zeph. ii. 13-15,) says, "But Nahum proceeds even farther than Zephaniah, and in more than one passage strongly intimates, that in future ages, the place should not be known on which it stood, (i. 1, 8, 9; ii. 11; iii. 17,) and so complete has been the desolation that travellers, critics, and historians cannot agree in fixing the precise spot on which it stood." p. 62. It is certainly somewhat difficult to see this event in Nahum's prophecy, as every one will experience who will consult the passages; but how completely is the misinterpretation of them exposed by the discoveries of Layard, and the sculptures of Nineveh recently deposited in the British Museum!

that it is indispensable—to the existence of an intelligent Church. To be enlightened, she must not only possess God's Word, but she must comprehend clearly and rationally His teachings therein. Let us then endeavor to lay hold of some principles by which this may be accomplished.

Prophecy, in the popular acceptance of the term, consists in the announcement of events before they happen. But this is not its only signification. The Prophets of God were the authorized instructors of the people, especially in sacred things, and the Prophecies which they declared, were intended for public instruction; so that teaching is an idea which ought to be attached to the writings of the prophets—teaching for present purposes; for, notwithstanding there is contained in those documents the mention of circumstances, that were to transpire posterior to the time of their production, yet that is very far from being the general feature of those which are called the prophetic writings. Indeed it may be safely affirmed, that predictions, which were to receive their fulfilment in after times in outward circumstances, constitute but a small proportion of those documents, and these are what are commonly understood by prophecy.

Now man, ordinarily, can know nothing of futurity, otherwise than by calculating the probable or possible results of certain actions, under certain circumstances. For instance, politicians may predict that the violation of international laws will lead to public hostilities. Moralists may foretell that disgrace and ruin will follow profligate conduct. The jurist can foresee the banishment of a certain class of criminals. The political economist may predict consequences, which may arise to commerce from the enactment of free or restrictive laws respecting it. The trader may calculate upon future riches, if he can now dispose of his commodities at a certain value. The intelligent master may foretell the happiness and satisfaction of his workpeople, if he finds them with sufficient employment, and pays them an adequate remuneration. The astronomer foretells phenomena that are to be exhibited in the heavens, and other philosophers may declare what will be the results of certain influences acting upon the earth. These, and innumerable other things may be predicted with tolerable accuracy; still, they who make such predictions do not look into futurity, and therefore are not prophets; nor are their prognostications prophecy. What they say is founded either on the experience of the past, or the declared result of obeying or transgressing a certain course of action. We therefore ordinarily see the future only through these media. History tells us what has been, and to some extent, points out its causes; and men properly infer that like causes will produce

similar results. This, however, is not looking into futurity ; it is simply a reasonable expectation, founded on the experience of the past. Futurity cannot be known to any but God ; and therefore none but He can cause to be declared what shall transpire in the future. He knoweth what is in man ; and also the tendency of human principles, in all their complicated arrangements individually, and collectively ; together with the ultimate acts in which they will close ; and therefore, He alone can direct the utterance of prophecy respecting them.

That this has been done, there can be no well-founded doubt, and hence it has been very properly, and with great success, urged as one of the evidences, which prove the Divine origination of the Christian Scriptures. Certainly no one but the Supreme could say, more than seven hundred years before its occurrence, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* The circumstance announced was so extraordinary ; the time which intervened between the prediction and its fulfilment was so long, and the final realization of it so certain, that nothing but the most hardened scepticism can resist the proposition. A similar argument may be urged respecting the fulfilment of many other prophecies referred to in the gospels. (See Matt. viii. 17 ; xii. 17 ; xiii. 35 ; xxi. 4 ; xxvii. 35 ; John xii. 38 ; xv. 25 ; xvii. 12 ; xviii. 9, 32, &c. &c.) They show most decidedly, that God has interfered in one age, to vouchsafe information respecting that which was to transpire in another, and so far they establish, upon the soundest evidence, that such principles had a Divine origination.

* Isaiah vii. 14 ; Matt. i. 23. We are aware of the clouds into which criticism has raised this passage. Dr. Judd considered that it referred to the circumstance, that a person who was a virgin at the time of the prediction, would give birth to a son at no distant period, and that before he grew up, the enemies of Judah would be destroyed ; and that this is how it was to be a sign to Ahaz ! ! Doubtless there were many virgins at that time who subsequently became mothers. Dr. Pye Smith observes : "It seems to be as clear as words can make it, that the son promised was born within a year after the prediction." — *Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, 2nd edit., vol. i., p. 382. Dr. A. Clarke does not concur in these views, though the writers do not mean by those opinions to deny the passage to refer to the circumstances under which Christ was born. The Rev. J. Martineau, however, thinks that there is nothing in the narrative "to preclude the supposition of the son spoken of being already born at the very time when the prediction was uttered ;" (Discourse *The Proposition that Christ is God, proved to be false*, p. 26 ;) contending that His mother was not a virgin, but Jerusalem ; and that the son was Hezekiah, "a living child to his parents, he was yet the city's embryo king" ! ! Whatever conclusion these and other writers of the same school, may arrive at respecting the immediate signification of the prediction, it seems certain that the remote application given to it by the evangelist is the only true one. When referred to any other event, it is uncertain and obscure, but when referred to that, it is distinct and plain — for that, there is Divine authority.

The fulfilment of the prophecy to which this argument refers, took place in the external world. But this was not the design of every prediction; nor was all that was involved in that, displayed in outward occurrences. Prophecy does not necessarily mean, that the future things of which it speaks are of the outer world. There are many instances recorded, in which it must be evident that this is not the case; and even those which did close in natural occurrences, must have had a primary reference to internal principles, because it is from these that such events arise. It is usual with the interpreters of prophecy to look for its fulfilment in the histories of the nations of the earth, in their rise and progress, their wars and commotions, their prosperities and distresses, their decline and fall; also in the fate of Kings, the disposal of governments, the establishment of the papacy, its dominion and vicissitudes, with many other circumstances pertaining to the natural world. It is true that some events have transpired in the world, which in some of their general features, coincide with some of the statements of prophecy, and it is by no means unreasonable to suppose that those events may have been referred to by it.* Yet it appears to us that prophecy, with a very few exceptions, can only refer to worldly occurrences in a secondary way, and that they are by no means its primary meaning.† It seems clear that God's teachings must refer to spiritual things, rather than to worldly and political events. The one is permanent, the other is transitory. The former respects our condition in the life to come; the latter contemplates us simply as dwellers in the world. There can be no doubt as to which of these has His chief regard.

The first object then of Divine prophecy must be to announce the development of certain principles of thought and affection, and to point out the states which they will induce upon the interior life of man. As a prophecy is fulfilled in this way, there may, in some cases, be a manifestation of those principles and states even in the outer world, and in those respects the prediction may receive a more external accomplishment. Nevertheless the latter has very seldom presented all the features which the prophecy demands. It is only the leading facts of particular portions of history, which can be made to square with the

* See 1 Kings xiii. 2, concerning the birth of Isaiah; Isaiah xlv. 28, xlv. 1, respecting the expedition of Cyrus; and Malachi iii. 1, as referring to the person and office of John the Baptist.

† See Genesis xv. 12, in which it is supposed the character of the Arabians was foretold; and Jeremiah l. 39, 40; Zephaniah ii. 13-15, and Ezekiel xxvi. 3-5, 14, 21, which are considered to have foretold the fate of Babylon, Nineveh, and Tyre. Observe, however, the highly figurative language of those predictions, and notice the difficulty of finding a corresponding natural event for all their terms.

details of the prediction. Neither learning nor ingenuity has been enabled to do more than this for it. On the one hand, there have been subordinate points of prophecy, for which there have not been discovered corresponding circumstances in the general history which is supposed to have been its fulfilment; and on the other hand, there are recorded a variety of facts connected with such general history, to which it is evident the predictions do not refer.

For instance; the prophecy contained in the eleventh chapter of Daniel is commonly thought to have received its fulfilment in certain political events, which are recorded in the histories of Persia and Greece. The four kings referred to in the second verse, are considered to have been Cambyses, the son of Cyrus; Smerdis the Magian; Darius the son of Hystaspes; and Xerxes the son of Darius; and that the "mighty king" spoken of in the following verse was Alexander! It is supposed that the king of the south mentioned in the fifth verse, is Ptolemy Lagus, one of Alexander's generals; and that the "prince" referred to is Seleucus Nicator, "the king of the north." The statement of the sixth verse, namely, that "in the end of years they shall join themselves together; for the king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement;" is understood to be a prediction of the marriage of Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, to Antiochus Theos, king of Syria. We need not refer to more of this prediction, nor to its orthodox interpretations.* Enough is evident to establish the truth of our position in the mind of any one who will fairly look at all the circumstances. There are certain facts in the history of the transaction referred to, for which there are no corresponding terms in the prediction; and there are also terms in the prediction for which there are no corresponding facts in the history. And therefore, we infer that certain general features of the history are rather coincidences with the prophecy than any direct pointings of the Holy Spirit.

It is admitted that there are details in the prediction, which have not their corresponding parts in history; and also, that there were events in the history which have no indications in the prophecy; but these are considered as inferior matters, which do not effect the truth of the general interpretation. This however does not appear to us a sound opinion. Surely the subordinate events, the by-play of a history sufficiently important to have been predicted in God's Word, could not have been unimportant

* See Dr. Prideaux's *Connection*; Bishop Newton on the Prophecies; Dr. A. Clarke, and other commentators. For a spiritual explanation of the above prediction, the reader is referred to the seventeenth sermon of the *Exposition of Daniel*, by the Rev. M. Sibley.

or unforeseen ; and does not the absence of any mention of these in the prediction, show that it does not point exclusively to the general transactions supposed to have been its fulfilment?

Besides, there are many details in the prophecies which are not attended to as necessary things, for which to find a counterpart in history. But surely it is a mistake so to treat them. They would not have been stated, if their accomplishment had not been requisite for a complete fulfilment of the prediction. The Divine mind would not have caused a syllable to be written, which had not a distinctive meaning. All that God has caused to be said in his Word, is designed to express something for our intellectual profit or spiritual use ; and therefore, the minutiæ of prophetic writings are to be realized, as well as their general scope, or their fulfilment cannot be considered as complete.

There are several other prophecies in the Word, for which some general coincidences may be found in the history of the world. And these may be called their fulfilments. But we are not from these to conclude, that the predictions can have no other meaning. There are some prophecies which may have been frequently fulfilled, so far as the general occurrences of society may be regarded as coincident with the general terms of the prophecy. For instance, it is written, "nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginnings of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you : and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise and shall deceive many, and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." (Matt. xxiv. 7-12.) These statements are commonly considered to point out the calamities which were to precede and attend the destruction of Jerusalem. It is well known that many circumstances transpired during that extraordinary period, which answer very closely to the terms of the prediction. The Jews and Syrians broke into a fearful hostility, and the different tetrarchies and provinces into open war against each other. (See Bishop Newton, and Dr. Lardner.) A famine took place in Jerusalem ; (see Acts xi. 28, Josephus, Ant. b. xx. c. 2 ;) and earthquakes in Crete, Syria, Melitus, Chios, and Samos. (See Grotius.) Affliction, death, and hatred, were very rife. False prophets arose in the person of Simon Magus, (Acts viii. 9 ; xiii. 6, 8 : 2 Cor. xi. 13,) Hymeneus, and Philetus : (2 Tim. ii. 17, 18 :) and the love of many, for the things of Christianity, waxed cold. (Gal. iii. 1-4 ; 2 Tim. i. 15.) Those events certainly agree with the terms of the prophecy, and so far they may be regarded

as outward fulfilments of it. But it is to be observed that the terms of the prediction are very general. No particular nations or kingdoms are pointed out, as being those which were to rise against each other. The localities of the famine and the earthquakes are not named; nor are there any marks given by which to indicate who the false prophets were to be. All these circumstances must have been well known to the Lord; and if he had referred to the period and events above adverted to, as the exclusive fulfilment of his prediction, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have spoken of them with more precision. But this is not the case, simply because those circumstances were not the exclusive things referred to. Many times have nations risen against nations, and kingdoms against kingdoms; and famines, pestilences, and earthquakes have frequently transpired. So also, have persecutions of the faithful, and offences against religion. The prevalence of hatred, the rising up of false prophets, and the abounding of iniquity, have taken place over and over again during the last eighteen hundred years. Indeed, every particular mentioned in the prediction, has been realized upon an extensive scale in the countries of Europe, within the last century! As such recurrent events have presented a general counterpart to the general terms of the prediction, it seems plain that its signification ought not to be restricted to any one of them. It points to one quite as clearly as to another, because none of those outward events were the primary things regarded. It has a more interior meaning, and refers more specifically to the state of the Church, and consequently to the religious principles of men, than to their nationality, politics, or physical calamities. And this view is applicable to a large proportion of the prophecies. Revelation contemplates higher and more enduring objects than those of the world — objects which would not in the process of time present themselves to the common cognizance of men without the assistance of supernatural direction. Still it may have been necessary, as men sunk into naturalism, that they should have something sensual by which to effect an interpretation of prophecy. This is not simply true of Jewish sensuality, but also of the literalists of Christendom. If they could not see some coincidences between prophecy and history, the former would be rejected, and thus the preservation of the Word would be endangered. To prevent these consequences, several of the prophecies are so written as to admit of being interpreted in some general way by the events of worldly history. God has mercifully accommodated His communications to the weaknesses of His creatures. Nevertheless, it is evident from the very general way in which the prophecies, in this case, have to be viewed, and the history applied, in order to educe any acceptable

interpretation, that something of a more recondite nature is intended to be expressed, than that which meets the sensual imagination. Indeed, it is commonly acknowledged that some prophecies have a double sense,* the one literal or temporal, and the other spiritual or eternal. If this be true, it surely cannot be questioned that the more refined — the most enduring sense — is that which was principally regarded by its Divine propounder.

It is the state of man's interior life, about which God has made a Revelation. By the fall, Heavenly intelligence and love have been plunged into vicissitude, and exposed to ruin. Our inclination to favor what is evil and false, has taken a deep and malignant root in our nature. One result of this is a complication of states both in individuals and society. The precise quality of those states, and the consequences which they will induce upon the human soul, are known only to the Almighty. He therefore, is the only Being who can declare what they are, and in what they will result: and this we conceive to be the grand object of prophecy. It comports with the Divine wish to instruct mankind respecting those things which relate to their everlasting interests. Thus prophecy is a leaf in our spiritual lesson book, from which to learn something concerning the interior states of men and the consequences which they induce.

The literal sense of prophecy is, in general, very obscure; so much so, that no one can say what are the precise outward circumstances which are pointed at by them, irrespective of Revelation. Hence it has become a canon, that the exact meaning of prophecy is never understood until the time of its accomplishment. "Prophecy" it is said "was designed to point beforehand to something which was afterwards to be revealed;" † the fuller revelation consisting in the accomplishment of those things to which the prediction referred. The occurrence in such cases is made to be the fuller Revelation, though the occurrence itself may not be recorded in the Scriptures; and consequently, on this hypothesis, the human interpretation of a prophecy becomes a fuller Revelation than God's statement respecting it! But can this be a correct view of the subject? Of what use is a prediction, which is never to be understood until the period of its fulfilment? To say that it is "given to create an expectation of things not yet fully explained," does not answer the inquiry; for how can men expect things, the meaning of which they do

* "Prophecies frequently have a double meaning, and refer to different events, the one near, the other remote; the one temporal, the other spiritual, or perhaps eternal." Horne's *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, vol. 2, pt. II ch. vii. canon 1, where also evidences to the same effect are cited from a variety of eminent authorities.

† Dr. Shuckford's *Sacred and Profane History of the World Connected*, vol. iv. p. 177.

not know? Besides, why raise an expectation of such a character among a people who, after all, as is evident in some instances, were not to live to see its realization? Was not the postponement, and final frustration of hope, calculated to destroy their faith in the promise? Another view must be taken of this matter. The purpose of written prophecy before the time of its fulfilment, was to furnish materials for the expression of that series of spiritual things which it is the chief object of the Word to declare. The events in which, (the Scriptures assure us,) certain predictions were fulfilled, were recorded for the same purpose. But the meaning of Divine prophecy is not exhausted, because particular fulfilments can be recited. It does not, by such a circumstance, fall into the position of a thing that was useful, but which has, by a certain realization, ceased to be so. No! It is still predictive, and still in the process of receiving spiritual fulfilment, because it treats of human states. When God speaks, it is not simply for one age, or for one people; but for all time and for all men.

Prophecy need not have been written in a symbolical language, if it treated principally of mundane things. It is the objects of spirituality and mind which require to be thus spoken of, and which, indeed, cannot be spoken of in any other way. If the terms of prophecy are obscure, how are the events of history to explain them? They can do so in no other way, than that of bending the expression of the one so as to suit the transactions of the other. The resemblances thus established may satisfy the judgment of some, but who, without Divine authority, can undertake to say that such and such events in history were the fulfilment of such and such declarations of the prophets? No worldly fact can with certainty, be said to be the fulfilment of prophecy which is not declared to be so in the Scriptures. And we have no hesitation in believing, that all the worldly histories to which the prophecies refer, are therein related, and consequently that those predictions for which the Scriptures do not furnish the historical fulfilment, were never intended for that kind of realization.

For instance, it was promised to Abraham that he should "be a father of many nations," and that "kings should come out of him." (Gen. xvii. 5, 6.) This, the Scripture histories assure us, was fulfilled. He was the progenitor of those who reigned over Israel and Judah. Ezekiel, when among his captive brethren in Babylon, delivered a prediction respecting the fate of those who had been left behind at Jerusalem, and said, "The prince that is among them shall bear upon his shoulder in the twilight, and shall go forth: they shall dig through the wall, and carry out thereby: he shall cover his face that he see not the ground with

his eyes." (Ezekiel xii. 12.) This may have been fulfilled in the case of Zedekiah, of whom Jeremiah relates, that "It came to pass, that when Zedekiah the king of Judah saw them, and the men of war, then they fled, and went forth out of the city by night, by the way of the king's garden, by the gate betwixt the two walls;" but that they were pursued and brought to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar "put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains to carry him to Babylon." (Jeremiah xxxix. 4-7.) Again, Isaiah, speaking of the advent of the Messiah, said, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Isaiah lxi. 1, 2.) Jesus cited this prediction before the people in the synagogue, and said of it, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears" — (Luke iv. 18) — fulfilled in the events of His preachings, His miracles, and His presence in the world. The Psalmist, treating prophetically of the circumstances which attended the closing scene of the Lord's presence in the world, said, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture," which is stated to have been fulfilled in the conduct of the soldiers, at the time of the crucifixion. (Psalm xxii. 18; Matthew xxvii. 35.) Joel also said, "And it shall come to pass, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit," &c. (Joel ii. 28, 29.) This, the apostle Peter distinctly informs us, was fulfilled in the events of Pentecost. (Acts ii. 16.) From these cases, and a variety of others which might be cited, we learn that the Word itself indicates certain outward circumstances in which the predictions were accomplished. And, as observed above, we have no doubt that the Scriptures furnish the historical relations, in which were fulfilled all the prophecies which really pointed to visible transactions in the world. Still it seems evident, from the literal structure of those predictions, and from a comparison of them with the events in which they were realized, that they do not, from the time of such realizations, cease to point to any other objects: it is surely reasonable to conclude that they will always refer to moral and spiritual things pertaining to the Church. If prophecy regards the action of human principles, which will hardly be disputed, then it cannot have its meaning exhausted by any special development of them, unless we suppose what is very improbable, namely, that such principles, from that special development, ceased to exist!

There are, however, a great number of prophecies, the fulfilment of which the Scriptures do not relate, but which are expected to take place in worldly events. But if an uninspired person cites a fact from history, and says that it was the accomplishment of a certain prophecy, may he not be asked, how he knows that that history was the object to which the Holy Spirit pointed? He may infer it from the resemblance of the facts to the terms of the prophecy, but he cannot be certain that his inference is true. Doubtless, those cases of fulfilment which the Scriptures relate, were pronounced to be so by the same Spirit that first dictated the prediction; and how else can any such a realization be known? If they could have been deduced by a process of reasoning or conjecture, surely no supernatural interposition would have been employed to point them out. God only interposes to inform us of that which we have no means of knowing through any ordinary channel. If the Scriptures do contain predictions which are yet to be realized in outward events, no one can be certain what those events are without special information from on high. We must, therefore conclude, either that all the prophecies, intended for natural accomplishment, have been fulfilled, and as such are recorded in the Scriptures; or, that further supernatural communications are to be made respecting them. One or the other of those alternatives must be adopted.

But although the predictions, intended for such a realization, were fulfilled in events which the Scriptures record, both of those relations point to a more interior sense than what the letter expresses. This may, in part, appear from the cases above adduced, in which the careful student will find it difficult to see in the fulfilment, all the points which answer to the literal terms of the prophecy. No one could have concluded from the prophecies, that the historical events which the Scriptures mention, would have fulfilled them: and every one must experience difficulty in identifying a complete resemblance between the two narratives. This is very remarkable in the case of Joel's prediction, and the events at Pentecost, in which it was accomplished. There are a sufficient number of points to establish a general resemblance between the two narratives in all cases, but it is plain that all are wanting in some details, to make the outline so complete, that *literal* criticism may be fully satisfied; and the reason is, because more interior things were intended to be expressed by those prophecies than could be exhibited in merely natural and worldly occurrences.

This is evident from the fulfilments recorded of other cases. Thus Matthew writes of the Lord, that there were "brought unto him many that were possessed with devils; and he cast out

the spirits with His word, and healed all that were sick : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.* Surely the terms of the prediction, and the facts in which it was accomplished, do not appear to have any close resemblance to each other. What natural similitude is there between taking our infirmities, and casting out devils ; or between bearing our sicknesses, and healing the sick ? To explain this matter, recourse must be had, not to natural, but to spiritual considerations. The statement of the prophet refers to the condition of the Lord's maternal Humanity, in that it " bore our griefs and carried our sorrows," not in our stead, or as our substitute, but as the natural consequence of its maternal origin. By means of these, a plane was provided for the admission of evil spirits into it, for he was tempted in all respects as we are, that the evil spirits which induce temptations, might be fought against and conquered ; and thus that man might be delivered from their preponderating influences. In this work, the redemption of the world consisted. Now as the Lord was effecting those conquests over the devil and his temptations in his maternal Humanity, he was also promoting a similar work in the infirm humanity of those who were diabolically obsessed : and thus, in casting out devils and healing sickness in others, He was realizing the purpose for which He took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses, and thus fulfilled the prediction of the prophet.

The prophecies, the precise terms of which were more specially realized in external events than any other, were some of those which the Lord delivered respecting himself. Jesus showed " unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matt. xvi. 21.) These details were all realized to the very letter. They were spoken to parties who lived to see their fulfilment — parties to whom it was said, " now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe," and to whom it was promised, that the Holy Spirit should bring all things which the Lord had spoken to their remembrance. (John xiv. 26, 29.) Nevertheless both the predictions, and the narratives which record their fulfilment, are to be understood as containing something more than what is expressed in the mere letter. This is plain from what is subsequently related. The Lord, after His

* Matt. viii. 16, 17 ; Isaiah liii. 4. The orthodox view of the prophet's statement is, that Jesus took those griefs upon himself that He might be punished in our stead, and suffer as our substitute, and thus reconcile the Father to us ; and that he became a sacrifice both for original guilt and the actual sins of men. But how does this doctrine agree with what the evangelist asserts to have been the fulfilment of the passage ?

resurrection, called the attention of His disciples to the predictions He had delivered respecting Himself, and said unto them, "these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things might be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures." (Luke xxiv. 44, 45.) They had witnessed the Lord's sufferings and trials, and at the time these statements were made, they saw that He was risen from the dead; and if these events had been the only things referred to in the above prediction, it surely would not have required any further opening of their understandings to have comprehended it. They had seen the letter of it thoroughly fulfilled. But because the letter of the prediction, and the history of the fact in which it was realized, refer also, to the rejection of the Divinity of the Lord's Humanity by the Church which He was then engaged in planting, and to the faith therein which would be evolved by His second coming; and because those things are also treated of by Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms, the Lord opened the understanding of His disciples that they might understand the Scriptures; that is, He gave them an interior perception of the spiritual drift and significancy of those portions of the Word which refer to that rejection and subsequent faith—a perception which would recognize more ideas in a moment than could be uttered in an hour, and which no mere seeing of the circumstances related, or any common understanding of the letter, could ever produce. It is in reference to the rejection of the Divinity of the Lord's Humanity* by the corrupters of the first Christian Church, and the intellectual acknowledgment of that doctrine which is to prevail in the new dispensation, to be established at his second coming, that it is written, "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore." (Rev. i. 18.) It may be said of the Lord, that he is dead when He is not acknowledged, for this is His state with respect to those who do not believe in the Divinity of His Humanity; but He "liveth" and is "alive forevermore" in that Church in which this doctrine is received. He taught this doctrine when He said, "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." (John v. 26.) The Son is the Human-

* "Many at this day think of the Lord only as of an ordinary man, like themselves; the reason is, because they only think of His Humanity, and not at the same time of His Divinity, although His Divinity and His Humanity cannot be separated." *Doctrine concerning the Lord*, 21. "In consequence of this idea, it has now come to pass, that a Christian cannot, without difficulty, be led to think of a *Divine Human Being*, although it should be said that the Lord's soul or life was from conception, and is Jehovah Himself." *Divine Providence*, 262.

ity of the Father, and for Him to have life in Himself as the Father hath, is for Him to be Divine, and so one with the Father; for the Divine life is not divisible.

Although, then, there are some prophecies which received a certain amount of external fulfilment, this being recorded in the Scriptures, yet these cases are very few, and from these it is very evident, that the predictions refer to something more than the literal sense; for they contain expressions which obviously indicate the occurrence of spiritual phenomena. In the case just cited, the Lord's resurrection is declared. The circumstance of their having received some external fulfilment, has not passed them into desuetude. If so, the use of such prophecies now is only to assure us that they were prophecies once, and if this were the case, they must produce on men opposite effects in different ages. With the ancients, they must have excited expectation, and with the moderns, retrospection. This is the necessary consequence of narrowing their meaning into a single, or an external fulfilment only. To some, this may not be a formidable difficulty, yet it must be evident that fulfilled prophecy becomes history, and thus, supposing prophecy to point only to some temporary and local circumstance, time must alter the character of what God has spoken! Is this consistent? We think not: we cannot conceive that events or time were ever designed to take away its predictive features. Prophecy does not cease to be prophecy because it may have received certain fulfilments in one age, any more than a precept ceases to be a precept because some men may have obeyed it. The one is quite as universal and continual in its application to man as the other. What God has prophetically spoken must always be prophecy. However it may have been fulfilled at one period, it is still to be accomplished in another. Its application is not to be exhausted by one, nor by a hundred, realizations. But these truths will not be seen, unless the prophecy be acknowledged to contain a spiritual meaning; in that case, it will be understood to point to some continual and universal developments in human society and character.

It is because spiritual things are the principal topics of prophecy, that it is written in so figurative a style. If natural circumstances had been chiefly spoken of, they might have been described in terms of a merely literal meaning. But mental conceptions, and spiritual emotions and phenomena, could not be so expressed. They have to be indicated in a symbolic way, and this being an unquestionable characteristic of prophetic writing, proves the spirituality of its designs. Indeed a large proportion of the prophecies contain no coherent or intelligible literal sense. The terms employed in many, are entirely

symbolic. As an instance of this, we may advert to the prophetic things pronounced by Jacob upon his sons. "Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days." (Gen. xlix. 1. See the chapter throughout.) The predictions which he then uttered concerning their future condition, are all expressed in words so decidedly figurative as to leave no doubt that some other than a literal meaning was intended to be conveyed by them. Commentators have attempted to find in the history of the tribes, some features which coincided with what they call the poetic description, but they are compelled to admit that great difficulties beset the inquiry, and that some of the sentences are "unfinished." (Dr. A. Clarke on those predictions.) But the meaning of those predictions is not to be found in that direction; for it is evident that most of those things which it is said should befall them in the last days, did not take place, either with the immediate sons of Jacob or their descendants. Thus it is said that the posterity of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, should be cursed; but there is no evidence to show that this was the case; on the contrary, Levi appears to have been blessed above the rest; for his descendants were honored with the priesthood. Neither did that befall Judah which is said of him; nor, without recourse to an interior sense, can any one understand what is meant by its being said of him, that he is a lion's whelp, couched as an old lion; binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; washing his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes; having eyes red with wine, and teeth white with milk. Again, it is said that Zebulon should dwell at the haven of the sea, be a haven for ships, and a border to Zidon; that Issachar is a strong ass couching between two burdens; and Dan a serpent in the way, and an adder in the path, biting the heels of the horse, so that his rider may fall backward. Equally remarkable things are predicted of the other tribes, from which it is manifest that spiritual subjects of the Church, and not historical affairs of the people, are treated of by them. The particular things indicated in those subjects, our space will not allow us to *discuss*. It may, however, be observed in passing, that the blessings are not pronounced in the order in which the sons of Jacob were born, (Genesis xxix, xxx, xxv,) nor in that in which they afterwards encamped in the wilderness, (Numbers ii,) nor in that in which they were numbered by Moses, (Numbers i,) nor in that in which they are stated to inherit the sanctuary, (Eze. xlviii,) nor in the order of the sealing. (Rev. vii.) There is a reason for this, which has its ground in the spiritual things intended to be expressed. The sons of Israel represented the principles of truth and goodness proper to the Church, and their names are

related in different orders, for the purpose of signifying the distinct arrangements which those principles attain in different states of the Church, or, what is the same thing, in the man of the Church. Every one knows that there are some men, with whom *truth* is the first principle; and that with others, *goodness* takes the lead; also that with some, reasoning is the uppermost thing, and with others simple obedience or faith; and thus it is easy to see, that the principles of the Church will be differently marshalled as men are influenced by celestial, spiritual, or natural states. Now that order in which Jacob gathered his sons, represents the arrangement to which the things of the Church exist in the natural mind, for he was about to tell them what should befall them in the "last days," *i. e.*, the ultimate states; and the predictions which he then delivered teach us what will come to pass with those things, when the Church, in which they exist, has descended into this external condition. Thus the subjects treated of are:—

FIRST, The rejection of faith separate from charity; which faith is represented by Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, who are therefore stated to have been "cursed."

SECOND, When this is effected, there will follow the exaltation of love, conjoined with charity and its works, which things were represented by Judah, Zebulon, and Issachar, and who are therefore promised such peculiar blessings.

THIRD, The subordination of knowledge, obedience, and their delights, represented by Dan, Gad, and Asher, which things their names import, and

FOURTH, The experience of temptation, the resistance of it, and deliverance therefore, represented by Napthali, Joseph, and Benjamin, and therefore, among other things, it is said of the first that "he giveth goodly words," of the second that "the archers have sorely grieved him," and of the third that "he shall devour the prey."

Moses also pronounced a series of predictions respecting the sons of Israel, (Deut. xxxiii.,) but both the order in which they are related, and the things which are promised, are very different from that just adverted to. The literal sense of those promises is equally mysterious; and many other instances could be easily selected, in which the prophetic history is utterly unintelligible without the aid of a spiritual sense. (See Isaiah xv. lx. lxiii.; Jer. xlviii.) It is evident therefore, that such were never intended to receive any other than a spiritual fulfilment. The very first prediction written in the Bible is of this class. After the fall, it was said to the serpent "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it (*i. e.*, *אדמ' hu*, *HE*) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise

his heel." (Gen. iii. 15.) Every one is aware that this prediction is considered to relate to the coming of the Messiah, and the work of His redemption; but no one can make out the existence of any particular enmity of serpents to the human race, nor can it be shown that the Messiah ever literally bruised the head of any. The terms are eminently figurative. Doubtless, in a primary sense, they refer to the process of redemption, by which the preponderating power and influence of sin, *i. e.*, the serpent, were to be overcome by the seed of the woman, *i. e.*, the Messiah. This however, was a work of a purely spiritual character; and by its accomplishment, men were placed in a condition to realize in themselves the spiritual sense of the prediction. For in that sense, by the serpent, is signified sensual love, for this is the principle by which man is seduced from the love of God and his neighbor; and by the seed of this serpent is denoted the whole progeny of false persuasions which descend therefrom. But by the woman is represented the Church — *i. e.*, those principles which regard goodness with affection, and which the Divine Providence cherishes and preserves in the interior of the human mind as means for promoting its regeneration; and by the seed of the woman is signified corresponding truths; so that between the seed of the serpent, as falses, and the seed of the woman, as truths, there is perpetual enmity. And he — the interior mind which is thus developed — will tread upon the serpent's head; that is, put down the dominion of sensual love; though that love, because it is a principle of man's nature, will always weaken his power of doing good in the natural principle, which is signified by the serpent bruising his heel. In this we have an interpretation which all may appreciate; for all may experience it. The prediction is thus not simply a Revelation respecting the work of the Lord's redemption, but it also refers to a practical fact in us, and in all men. Hence the apostle said we should take heed unto prophecy "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place;" "knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation." (2 Peter i. 19, 20.) If a prophecy merely related to some particular time, country, or persons, it must needs be a comparatively private affair; it should be considered as referring to all time, and to the men of every age, in order to sustain that universal purpose which the Divine must have contemplated in its promulgation. The interpretations which are found for prophecy in the condition of some geographical locality, or political events, are not matters of public notoriety. They are generally confined to the privacy of historical learning. But when they are understood to treat of human principles, and the states of men, consequent upon their influence, they are seen to treat of truly public things.

It is the principles of human action in their various phases, which are the chief topics of prophecy, and hence they must have their realization in the personal experience of a religious life. It is conceded by those who admit a double sense in prophecy, that it may have some relation to the Church. This being the case, how easy is it to see that it must also have reference to the states of men, because the states of men are formed by their reception or rejection of the things of the Church. The Church exists in the individual; it becomes greater as its principles are more numerously received, but that does not alter its essential character. There was a time when the truths of Christianity were acknowledged by only twelve apostles, and then their purity was quite as great as in after times when professed by millions. Numerous recipients enlarge the visible form of the Church, but its essential nature lies with the intelligence and purity which are cherished by individuals. Those principles are liable to fluctuation and vicissitude as men cherish or neglect them. These are circumstances which it is important that men should know, and hence every possible condition by which they can be distinguished, is predicted in the Word.

These facts are most conspicuous in extreme cases. For instance, it is written, "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time, to recover the remnant of his people which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from the islands of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." (Isaiah xi. 11, 12.) This is one of those prophecies which are commonly understood to treat of the restoration of the Jews, that is, of their reception of Christianity, and their reinstatement as a nation in the land of Canaan. It is insisted that this doctrine is taught in the Scriptures, and that, too, by the very same parties who assert that prophecies are not to be understood until after their fulfilment. We cannot undertake to reconcile this inconsistency. If prophecies are not to be understood before they have been accomplished, then, as the Jews have not received Christianity, nor been restored to Palestine, the parties expecting it cannot have rightly interpreted the predictions. If men do not know the meaning of a prophecy before it is accomplished, by what means are they to identify the circumstance by which it is fulfilled? The common doctrine on the subject of this restoration has raised expectations which never can be realized. The ideas are founded in mistaken views of the whole subject. The prophecies point either to calamities, or to blessings; — to calamities

as the consequences of transgression ; to blessings as the results of obedience. The general tenor of the prediction before us, is to indicate some spiritual blessing which is to arise from the Divine presence. And this, God can communicate as well in one part of the earth as another. It does not require that men should reside in some particular geographical position, in order to be preserved in wisdom and virtue. The Jews would be spiritually blessed by the reception of Christianity ; but in that case they would no longer be Jews but Christians, and as such they would know that the blessings of the Almighty could be enjoyed in Britain as well as in Canaan. The Jews of this day have no inheritance in Palestine ; they have no nationality there ; it is not their country. Their fatherland, is wheresoever they are born ; and no religious blessings can be given in Judea, that may not be obtained in any other portion of the world. It does not require that men should dwell in a particular locality, in order to participate in the excellences of God's religion. If the Jews are converted, they may be quite as good and wise in the land of their nativity, or conversion, as in a foreign and uncongenial soil ; and their removal to it could never be regarded as a religious blessing. The fact is, that the prophecies which have been interpreted in this external and geographical sense relate to a more interior subject. They treat of the restoration of those spiritual principles of the Church which have been lost to men, in consequence of their long-continued degradation and perversity. Some idea of this will be furnished by a brief exposition of the above-cited prediction.

By the Lord's people are denoted the Lord's principles ; these are goodness and truth in all their beautiful variety. No people are the Lord's independently of these ; it is these which make them so ; hence they are the primary things referred to by such expressions. When the Lord, from His kingdom, looks down upon a people or a nation, he does not regard them because they were born in a certain country, or because they may be related to particular families after the flesh. No : He views them as to their interiors, and regards all men from the principles of faith and love that may be in them ; and therefore it is evident, that when He speaks of a people as being His, they are significant of principles which have sprung from Him. It is written, "I will say to them which were not my people ; thou art my people : " (Hosea ii. 23 :) the reason is, because the people under such circumstances were merely representative. He called them His people, not because they were His people, but because they were types of principles that are His. When, then, it is predicted that the Lord would set His hand a second time to recover the remnant of His people, the meaning is, that at His second

coming, He would unfold a power by which to restore to the Church those spiritual principles which sensuality, in the course of ages, would have dispersed. It is said that they should be recovered "from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from the islands of the sea;" because those various places, in the order in which they are recited, represent the states of reason and science, knowledge and obscurity, faith and worship, idolatries and the common information of the natural mind, in all of which there are to be found the remains and evidences of something that is spiritually true and good; and which, therefore, are to be recovered for the purposes of the Church. This idea will be readily understood when it is observed, that science and learning of various kinds, as they are now in the process of being examined, are all found to yield some evidences in favor of the truth of Revelation and the spirituality of its religion.

It is next written that the Lord would "set up an ensign for the nations;" to denote that at His second coming, the *Doctrine of the Divinity of His Humanity* would be proclaimed in His Church, for the reception of all who are in the good of intelligence. This was further taught by the Lord when He said, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." * The title "Son of man," in which He was to be lifted up, and in which He was to come again, (Matt. xxiv. 30,) expresses the Lord as to the spirituality of His Word. To lift it up, is to proclaim it to the Church, so that it may become an ensign there; hence it is said, "lift up thy voice with strength: lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of

* John iii. 14. Concerning this lifting up, there prevails a very unsatisfactory opinion. It is supposed that the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness upon a pole, (see Num. xx. 9,) had reference to the raising of Jesus Christ upon the cross, and the consequent crucifixion; and that as the Israelites, who looked to the brazen serpent on the pole, were cured of their afflictions, so the Christian, if he looks to the Lord on the cross, and regards Him as a victim, who suffered as a substitute for himself, will be saved. But this does not present itself to our minds as a true view of the case. The translation of Numbers says, "Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole," and the putting of the serpent on a pole is said to be a symbol of raising Christ on the cross. See the *Commentators*. Now it so happens that there is nothing about a *pole* expressed in the original; and therefore, if the pole disappears from the narrative, of course no symbol of the cross remains. The proper translation is this, "Moses made a serpent of brass, and raised it for a sign." Thus the raising up of the brazen serpent, and the lifting up of the Son of man, had no reference to the Lord's crucifixion and death. To lift up the Son of man, is the duty of the Christian; but to crucify Him, was the work of wicked and rebellious men. The brazen serpent when lifted up, was a sign of the Son of man glorified; and the Son of man is lifted up when the Divinity of His Humanity is proclaimed.

Judah, Behold your God!" (Isaiah xl. 9.) Not only is this ensign to be set up, but He will then "assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah," because by "the outcasts of Israel" are denoted the truths of faith which the understanding has rejected; and by "the dispersed of Judah" are signified the goods of charity which the will has scattered; while to assemble the former and gather the latter, denote their restoration to human thought and affection, and thus the renewal of the Church with light and loveliness.

Under this view of the case, the prophecy becomes intelligible. We see its consistency with the Divine character and purposes; it agrees with numerous other promises to elevate the Church into a condition of intelligence and virtue; and moreover it receives a particular fulfilment as frequently as individual men are regenerated. They who are born again, acknowledge the Lord, and in them are implanted the principles of faith and charity; — the outcasts of Israel are assembled, and the dispersed of Judah are gathered together — and thereby men are introduced into the enjoyment of the interior blessings of rational intelligence and active love.

It is commonly admitted that there are many prophecies which announce that the Church is, in process of time, to arrive at some very glorious condition; but how plain is it that in realizing this state, those predictions must also treat of the attainment of personal excellence by its individual members. The perfection of the Church always runs parallel with man's devotedness to its principles. The prediction refers quite as much to our personal character, as to the Church universally; for no excellence can ever become general among mankind until it has first met with individual reception. Universal things arise out of the multiplication of particulars. How certain then is it, that those prophecies which announce the future glory of the Church generally, can only be realized so far as religious excellence is formed and fixed in individual men!

For instance, it is written, only a few verses before the prediction last referred to, that "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My Holy Mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah xi. 6-9.) In this passage is described the state of peace which, in the process of time, is to be

introduced into the Church, called the Lord's Holy Mountain. But how is this to be accomplished? Certainly by no other means than that of the regeneration of individual men. The fall has introduced into our nature certain inclinations, the tendency of which is to destroy all the principles of innocence and purity; out of those inclinations arise a variety of hurtful affections, which are represented by the wolf, the leopard, the bear, the lion, the asp, and the cockatrice. But regeneration, that is to say, the reception of enlightened faith and practical charity, is designed to change their nature, to extract from them their ferocity, and to render them tame and docile. When this takes place, then all the heavenly sentiments of innocence, tenderness, and love, represented by the lamb, the calf, the fatling, and the child, are enabled to dwell in safety. Thus the prediction refers to the spiritual advantages which are to result from the regeneration of individual men; and through their numerical increase, to the Church at large. The Church cannot progress in holiness so long as men withhold their coöperative efforts; but God has foreseen a period when they will become more intelligent and sensible of spiritual things; and therefore, He has predicted the peaceful condition of His Church in those highly symbolical terms which have been cited.

That happy state has not yet taken place in the Church in general: it may have been realized by individual members; indeed, it must have been so with all those who have passed from this world into the heavenly kingdom. The fulfilment of the prediction, as a general blessing, has been hindered by that general indifference to really spiritual things, which has for ages been growing up in the very heart of Christendom. The genuine truths of the gospel have been overlaid with the impure inventions of men. They have not been regarded so much for their own intrinsic value, as from their connection with the authorities by which they have been promulgated. Truth exists independently of authority. It cannot be made by articles, creeds, or confessions, — they may express it, but no power on earth can make that true which is not so intrinsically; and no power in heaven would ever attempt to alter it. It has, however, been altered. The Church, on the authority of its ecclesiastics and collegiate institutions, professes to believe as true, that which men's reason does not see to be so. Mystery has been substituted for intelligence, and a faith in what is incomprehensible has paralyzed the healthful energies of saving charity. No candid observer of the state of the Church and the contents of her documents, can fail to recognize the truth of these statements. But these circumstances have not been brought about by the corruptions of a day. They are the work of ages; and society, in

successive generations, has connived at their existence. A state has thus been induced upon the Church, which renders it difficult for its professors to see the real deformity of those sentiments which go under the name of Christian truth. The eye, by being accustomed to see a deformity, ceases to feel its offensiveness; and the tongue, which is habituated to the taste of something that is nauseous in itself, may come to speak of it as savory. Familiarity with improprieties breeds a love for them which it is not easy to eradicate. So the religious society which has been habituated to receive that for truth, which no reason ever saw to be true, is not to be readily convinced that its faith is not founded upon truth; or, that its sentiments bear but a small resemblance to the actual teachings of the gospel. On this account it is not to be expected that a day or a year will bring about the renunciation of those views of religion and the Word, which it has taken ages to ingraft upon the mind, and the growth of which has given an obliquity to its vision.

The fulfilment, then, of the prophecies, which all parties concede to refer to the establishment of a more glorious condition of the Church than what at present exists, is to be brought about by a gradual process. Society is not to be forced into the acknowledgment of that which it does not really see. The eye, which is brought out of darkness into sunshine, does not at once behold the objects by which it is surrounded; the pupil must adapt itself to the illumination, before it can see with accuracy the forms and colors which are before it. It must feel its freedom, and its way. Nothing of the Church can be permanently valuable to man, which does not respect his liberty and give him light; and this must be the case with all that descends from God. Knowledge and freedom are to be among the constituents of the Lord's true Church. The promise is, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." (John viii. 32.) The Church in which these principles are displayed is doubtless, that dispensation of prophecy, in which all are to know the Lord, from the least unto the greatest. (Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34.) The period of those excellences is the "day of the Lord"—the result of His second coming. But the apostle says, "that day shall not come, unless there come a falling away first." (2 Thess. ii. 3.) This is a condensed expression of the Lord's predictions, respecting the events by which His second advent was to be preceded: when these take place, "then," said He, "shall the end come." (Matt. xxiv. 24.) The end of what? Of the world, says orthodoxy. But how can that be, when it is written, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever," (Ecclesiastes i. 4,) and that the Lord "laid the foundation of the earth

that it should not be removed forever." (Psalm civ. 5.) Creation originated in the Divine love, and was brought into being by the Divine wisdom; for what purpose then could God destroy it? He surely has not a destroying principle, which acts in opposition to His creating activity. If God were to effect the destruction of the world, He must have some reasonable cause for the execution of so terrible an event; for He must always act from the principles of the purest and the highest reason. Is the guilt of humanity to be regarded as affording such a reason? This it cannot be, because it supposes God to revenge the moral insults of men upon an insensible part of His creation — a part, too, that has undeviatingly obeyed the laws implanted in it, since the first hour it was ushered into existence. That reason, then, is not tenable; let us take another. Is it reasonable to suppose, that such a catastrophe will be preceded by what has been called the Millennium, when pure religion is to reach the summit of intelligence and virtue? Certainly not, because such an idea represents God as destroying the world at the very moment when its inhabitants have attained the beautiful object for which it was created; and as bringing upon them a terrible disaster, at the very time when they are obeying the principles, and enjoying the blessings of His religion. The whole idea is founded in error and mistake.* God has created man to perpetuate his existence, and not to destroy him; and He has designed, from the good and the obedient, to produce an angelic heaven; and therefore He said, "I have created him for My glory." (Isaiah xliii. 7.)

"The end," then, which it is predicted should come, is not the cessation of a beautiful world, but the termination of a corrupted Church. The Scriptures contain several passages in which either the phrase, or the idea of, "the end of the world" occurs; but these, it is well known, simply mean the consummation of the age; that is to say, of the degenerate periods of which the context treats. When the antediluvians were about to fill up the measure of their iniquity, the Lord said, "Behold, I will destroy them with the earth:" (Gen. vi. 13:) but the earth remained. To destroy the earth, is therefore a prophetic form, in which to announce the end of a perverted Church. Hence the apostle said, "Now, once in the end of the world, hath

* There are certain intimations in speculative astronomy, — such as the apparent gradual diminution of certain stars, and the actual disappearance of others from the stellar vaults, together with the presumption that the earth is making nearer approaches to the sun — which have sometimes been adverted to as a kind of collateral philosophy to support the above theological theory: but it will be time enough to examine the bearing of these speculations on such a subject, when the scientific world have agreed to say what is the true character of these phenomena.

Christ appeared." (Heb. ix. 26.) But at the end of what world did Christ appear? Certainly not at the end of the physical world; the expression therefore, must refer to the termination of the perverted Jewish Church.

The earth is mentioned in the Scriptures as a symbol of the Church, because the Church stands in a similar relation to the souls of men, that the earth does to their bodies. Man lives naturally on the earth, and he obtains therefrom his natural food; he dwells spiritually in the Church, and it supplies him with his spiritual food. The earth presents to him physical productions, by the study of which he may acquire information for the uses of the world; the Church discloses to him spiritual productions, by the contemplation of which he may procure intelligence for the purposes of heaven; and it is in consequence of such analogies, that the earth is employed as the symbol of the Church. Hence, when the Scriptures are treating of disastrous states of the Church, they say, that "the earth feared," "the earth trembled," "the earth shook," "the earth shall pass away," to indicate the distresses, and cessation of the Church, of which those things are spoken. It is therefore evident, that when the Lord said, "Then shall the end come," that He was predicting the termination of a desolated Church. This is plainly the subject of the context, in which it occurs; and upon the accomplishment of that event, He further declared, "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. xxiv. 30.)

This is one of the most remarkable predictions of the New Testament. How ought it to be understood? That it treats of the Lord's second advent is acknowledged upon all hands; and that the purpose of this advent must be to remove some calamity from the Church, and bring about a new state of religious information and virtue, will scarcely be disputed. This has been the effect of all the displays of the Divine presence in the affairs of men; and to this, the coming of the Lord, as the Son of man, can form no exception; but concerning the nature of that coming, different opinions prevail. Some say — and this is the most general opinion — that it will consist in the manifestation of His person in the sky: we believe that it consists in the demonstration of a spiritual sense within the letter of the Word. It is distinctly written, that the Son of man is to be revealed, (Luke xvii. 30,) and Revelation is rather an indication to the eye of the mind, than a display to the eye of the body. The prediction does not literally express the idea of a personal coming, and the circumstances to be associated with it, are certainly

described in figurative language. The "sign of the Son of man;" what is it? Dr. Campbell, (Notes critical and explanatory on the Gospels,) says, "the passage may be rendered, then shall the ensign of the Son of man be displayed in heaven. Such military ideas are not unsuitable to the prophetic style, or even to the tenor of this prophecy, which is highly figurative." "We have no reason to think that a particular phenomenon in the sky, is here suggested;" but this does not inform us what it is. And "the clouds of heaven," what are they? Certainly not those vapors which are beheld in the atmosphere, for these are the clouds of the earth. But how are *all the tribes of the earth* to see any phenomena which may be displayed in some particular locality? The highest clouds are only a few miles above the surface of the earth, and therefore, any phenomena in them could only be seen from a very small portion of the earth's surface. Is it not difficult to conceive how *that* in them which may be seen by us, would at the same time be visible to those who may dwell at the antipodes? It seems clear that those sentences were not intended to express physical things; and therefore, it cannot be reasonably maintained, that the coming of the Son of man ought to be so interpreted. Why regard the chief topic of the prediction as a natural occurrence, and all the auxiliaries which are described to attend it, as something else?

The idea of the Lord's second coming being a personal manifestation, seems to us altogether untenable. That circumstance took place at His first advent. He then assumed an Humanity for the purpose. That personal form, in which He was then seen by the natural eye of men, was natural; it "was crucified, dead, and buried;"* but that in which he was afterwards beheld by His disciples, was a "glorious body," and therefore, it could be seen only by the spiritual sight of men. The Divine person of the Lord, because it is Divine, cannot be seen by the natural eyes of men. As His *first* advent was personal, it follows that His *second* will be of a different character. He has never appeared twice under the same aspect; nor has He any where in the Scriptures, promised so to do. His first coming was in the flesh of man; His second, is to be in the clouds of heaven. When manifest in the flesh, he removed those unfavorable influences from mankind, the preponderating activity of which called forth that extraordinary presence; and by the glorification of His Humanity, He made provision against the possibility of its recurrence; and therefore, it seems plain that the nature of His second coming, will be different from the first.

* "His being buried, signified the rejection of the residue of the humanity taken from the mother; and His rising again the third day, signified His glorification." — *Doctrine concerning the Lord*, 16.

Indeed, this conclusion appears to be stated in the prediction. When the Lord made His first advent, it was under His title, "Son of God" — the annunciation to Mary was this, "That Holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God;" (Luke i. 35;) but He nowhere said, that He would come again under that designation; whensoever that subject was treated of by Him, it is the Son of man who is named.

These two names of the Lord are intended to express two different ideas respecting Him, and they are never found but in connection with the subject of these ideas. Thus, when His Divinity and Unity with the Father, His Divine power, faith in Him and love from Him, are treated of, He is called the *Son of God*; but when His passion and judgment, His redemption and salvation, His resurrection and second coming, are treated of, He is called the *Son of man*; and that two different ideas respecting Him, were intended to be expressed by these two titles, appears very plain from the Lord's answers to the interrogations of the high priest, in which He first confessed that He was the Son of God; but immediately added, "nevertheless, I say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sit on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."* Now the Lord is called the Son of God, in reference to the Divine Humanity of His person; and He is called the Son of man, in respect to the spiritual character of His Word. He is indeed, the Word in both cases; but in the former, He is the Word, as to its Divine teachings respecting God; and in the latter, He is the Word, as to its spiritual teachings respecting man. It is only through the Word, that we can have any knowledge of Him; and it is by the Word, that He communicates all His blessings. Hence, He is the Word, and all the titles which are applied therein to His person, are equally applicable to His Word.

It is known from the proem of John, that the title, "Son of God," is applied to "the Word;" and it cannot with reason, be denied that the other title, Son of man, must have a similar application; and as they cannot both have been designed to indicate the same thing, it seems plain that the former was intended to express a more interior idea respecting it than the latter; consequently, the title, "Son of God," in reference to the Word, is the Divine truth as it first proceeds from the bosom of the Deity; and the title, Son of man, is the Divine truth of the

* Matt. xxvi. 64. It is interesting to observe that the title, Son of man, is only applied to the Lord by Himself, and that He is never so spoken of by Paul or any other of the apostles. The three cases, one in Daniel vii. 13, and two in the Rev. chaps. i. 13, and xiv. 14; in which this name occurs in reference to Him, were visions of certain phenomena which are said to be "like the son of man."

Word, accommodated to the necessities and capacities of finite creatures. "This," says an elegant writer, "will account for its being called the Son of man. In no state whatever, does the Divine truth proceed from man: man can never be the author of it: yet it is on account of man that it is presented in the form of which we are here speaking; and being so accommodated for his sake, and by bringing it within the sphere of human intellect, as that exists both in this world and in the worlds beyond the grave, it is agreeable to analogy to denominate it, thus manifested, the Son of man."*

It was because the Word, considered as Divine truth thus accommodated, had been rendered of none effect by the traditions of the elders, (Matt. xv. 1-6,) that the Lord said, "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head:" (Matt. viii. 20 :) thus, cunning affections, and unstable thoughts, had their respective residences in the mind; but there was no resting-place for that wisdom of the Word, represented by the head of the Son of man. It is because that title represents the Divine truth of the Word, accommodated to finite apprehension, that the prophets were called sons of men; for they represented the truths of the Word which they respectively taught: and because the Lord, in that character, is preëminently the great Teacher, His name, in the Revelation, when His coming is also treated of in the symbolical style, is expressly called "the Word of God:" so that the title, Son of man, is one of the prophetic designations by which the Word is indicated. As the Word, in general, is distinctly spoken of as God—that is, as the exponent of that Divine wisdom by which the knowledge of His Being, character, and providence, is conveyed to man,—it follows that the particular titles which are applied to Him, must not only be expressive of some particular nature, attribute, or activity, belonging to His person; but also that the same titles must be similarly applicable to His Word; and consequently, the title, Son of man, among the rest: and this, from the analogy above adduced, appears to be that characteristic of the Word, by which a knowledge of Divine things is brought within the sphere of human cognizance. Hence, the promised coming of the Son of man, does not mean the personal coming of the Lord, but the intellectual discovery, by means of an influence from Him, of some new excellency in His Word, by the due appreciation of which, the renovation of the Church will be effected.† The excellency

* Rev. S. Noble's *Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures Asserted*, p. 346.

† Dr. Jortin happily remarks, respecting this prediction, that the "second coming of the Son of man may, perhaps, prefigure the manifestation of Christ, that is, of His power and spirit; and then may commence a better

so discovered, we esteem to be the spiritual sense of the Scriptures—a sense discovered by the simultaneous disclosure of the law of correspondence which exists between natural and spiritual things, according to which the Word is written, and without the knowledge of which no truly spiritual sense can be evolved from it.

Taking this to be a just view of the case, all the other portions of the prophecy will admit of easy explanations. On these, therefore, our observations will be brief. Thus, it is said, that “the sign of the Son of man shall appear in heaven,” to teach us that real evidence respecting the Divinity of the Word, will become manifest in the discovery of its spiritual sense. The sign of the Son of man, is evidence respecting that Divinity; and for this sign to appear in heaven, is for this evidence to be manifest in all its spiritual teachings. For heaven consists in the internal things of Revelation, and men get to heaven as they become principled in those internal things. On this discovery being made, it is said, “then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn,” because, by all the tribes of the earth are signified all the principles of charity and faith in the Church; consequently, all those who are influenced by them; and by their mourning, is denoted sorrow, not because those excellences of the Word have been discovered, but on account of the desolation which will then be observable in the professing Church, and which the discovery makes conspicuous. When the light comes, the cobwebs which have been woven in the obscurity of the past will certainly appear, and the good who see them will be affected with sorrow for their existence. These, however, are to “see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” It is only those who are influenced by some interior love for the spirituality of Religion, who are qualified to perceive the advantages thus adverted to. For, to “see the Son of man” is to perceive the Divine character of the Word, not from the ground of human authority, but from the peculiar nature of its composition and intrinsic character; and to see Him “coming in the clouds of Heaven,” is to perceive the character of it, manifesting itself in the letter of its spiritual teachings. To see Him coming “with power and great glory” is to perceive this manifestation, with its appropriate accompaniments of love and wisdom; love being the power, and wisdom the glory. The heaven of which the Scriptures treat, is not the blue expanse above us, but, as just observed, it consists of the internal things of Revelation; and the clouds of this heaven are its literal sense. Hence

and happier era, and such a renovation as may be called new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—*Remarks on Eccl. liis.*, vol. i. p. 151. Ed. 1805.

it is written of the "faithfulness" and "truth" of the Lord, that they "reach unto the clouds," (Psalms xxxvi. 5; lvii. 10,) to signify that the Divine fidelity and wisdom are extended to, and are manifested in the letter of His Word; the literal sense is a cloud, by which the light of the Divine teachings is moderated to meet the requirements of the natural mind, at the same time that it is an appropriate veil by which to hide its spiritualities from the profanation of the wicked. "Upon all the glory, there is a defence," or covering. (Isaiah iv. 5.)

From these considerations, which our plan forbids us to extend, we learn that this remarkable prediction concerning the second coming of the Lord, refers to the discovery of the spiritual sense of the Scriptures—a sense which is essential to the idea of their being the Word of God—a sense, by the acknowledgment of which the Church is to be brought into the experience of intelligence and amicability; and without which, it is evident, from all that has been said in this chapter, very much of the prophecy of the Scriptures is utterly unintelligible.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WORLD OF SPIRITS, A REGION BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL, THE FIRST RECEPTACLE FOR THE SOULS OF THE DECEASED; AND THE SCENE OF JUDGMENT.

ARGUMENT.—Our knowledge of the spiritual world, the result of Revelation. The "great gulf" between Dives and Lazarus, a region between heaven and hell. This intermediate region, called in this discussion the *world of spirits*. Why. A belief in such a world, of great antiquity, and taught by "the Fathers." The true idea respecting it began to be obscured as the Church began to decline. Purgatory a fiction, based on the doctrine of an intermediate state. Protestants, in rejecting the abuse, also repudiated the thing that had been abused. Conjectures respecting the destination of the soul between the time of death and the period of judgment. An intermediate region in the spiritual world the place for its reception and abode. Reasonableness of this opinion as drawn from the state of man at the time of his decease. Judgment implies that man has a mixed character at the time of death. The "last day" the day of every man's death. The scene of judgment, a world of spirits which is neither heaven nor hell. A difficulty suggested and removed. The ruling love of man, that which constitutes his actual character. The mixed character of man declared by the apostle Paul. This condition seldom, if ever, entirely removed from man during this life; it must be effected before his entrance upon his final destiny, and therefore, judgment is to be the means, and the world of spirits the scene of it. The way in which the judgment is effected. Scripture intimations respecting the existence of this intermediate state. Remarks on the Hebrew word *sheol*, sometimes translated hell, and at other times the grave. Some examples considered. The residence of Samuel, when after his death he was seen by Saul and the woman of Endor. The residence of David,

who had not ascended into heaven up to the day of Pentecost. The spirits in prison to whom the Lord went in spirit to preach. The objects seen in the visions of the prophets, were, for the most part, in the world of spirits. Remarks on the Greek word *hades*; commonly translated in the New Testament, hell. The definition of Josephus, and the classical meaning of the term. Instances from the book of the Revelation, in which it must signify an intermediate world. Other evidences and illustrations of the existence of that world. The Lord in that world between the periods of His crucifixion and ascension. The scene in which the bodies of the saints are described to have come out of the graves, and entered into the holy city. Judgment one of the purposes for which the Lord came into the world, the scene of that work must have been the world of spirits. The promise of Paradise to the penitent thief. Paradise a state in the intermediate regions of the spiritual world. Other evidence in proof of the existence of such a region, with illustrations. Some intimations respecting the arrangement in the spiritual world, of the good and bad, in opposite quarters, before the time of judgment. Summary, and practical view of the subject.

In the discussions which have been conducted in several of the preceding chapters, we have had occasion frequently to speak of spiritual things, and sometimes of the spiritual world. We now come to treat of these in a more definite way. The spiritual world is a very general term, which may mean heaven, hell, or any other region of spiritual existence, which may have been designed for the reception of those who depart from this life: it is therefore important that we should procure some more precise idea of those states or places, than what is expressed in so general a term. Our information concerning the existence of a spiritual world, like our knowledge respecting the Being of a God, and the immortality of the soul, is the result of Revelation. It must have been among the earliest communications which man, during the periods of his integrity, received from his Maker; and it was among the first of that knowledge which passed into shade and darkness, as man sunk into naturalism and sensuality. We are then, indebted to the Bible for the conservation of this knowledge. This is one of the peculiar announcements of that inimitable book. It not only teaches us respecting the existence of those two departments of the spiritual world, which are to be the final residences of the good and evil; but also, that there is an intermediate region, which is the first receptacle of the soul of man on his departure hence. The proof of this latter fact, is to constitute the subject of this chapter.

We believe that whatsoever Revelation has disclosed, was not discoverable to man by any other method; and also, that when any fact is so indicated to the human mind, there are philosophical considerations within its reach adapted to illustrate and confirm the truth of it. Now when the Lord Jesus Christ represents Abraham, who was in heaven, as saying to the rich man who was in hell, "between us and you there is a great gulf

fixed," * He seems plainly to have declared the existence of an intermediate spiritual world. And without the admission of this fact, there are no satisfactory means for explaining a variety of other statements and phenomena recorded in the Scriptures. This region, in the process of this discussion, we shall call the *world of spirits*, to distinguish it from heaven, which is the world of angels; and from hell, which is the world of devils; the term spirit, expressing, according to our view, the state of man immediately after death, and before the period of his judgment; the term angel, denoting the state of a good man's spirit after he has been judged, and raised to heaven; and the term devil, signifying the state of a wicked man's spirit after he has been judged and gone to hell.

A belief in the existence of an intermediate department in the spiritual world, is one of very great antiquity. It was acknowledged by the Jews, taught as a point of philosophy among the Greeks, inculcated in some of the poetry of the Latins, and many intimations respecting it are to be found in mythological history. The Jews, no doubt, drew their information respecting it from the Scriptures; and it is highly probable that the other ancients derived what knowledge they had concerning it, from some traditional intimations of the ancient Church: it was from tradition, thus derived, on which the Gentiles subsequently erected some of those philosophical systems which are known to have prevailed among them. The existence of the world of spirits was acknowledged by the early Christians: many of those who are called the Fathers of the Church, have delivered sentiments explanatory of this doctrine.† They, indeed, have been accused of having taken it, not from the Scriptures, but from the

* Luke xvi. 26. To avoid the force of this expressive sentence, it is said by Dr. Burnet, *Expos. xxxix Articles*, Art. xxii, that the souls of the rich man and Lazarus "were *presently* carried to their different abodes." Now the narrative says nothing about the time. It does not, indeed, tell us of the passage of those parties through that "gulf," but it does not say that they had not passed it; and may not the circumstance of reminding Dives of its existence, be taken as an intimation to him of the events which he had there experienced, and thus affording him the strongest assurance that his condition was irrevocably fixed? The "gulf" is not described to have been inhabited, but nothing to the contrary is related. Such a description was not requisite for the general purpose intended. When we assert the existence of a river, it is not necessary to state the kinds of fish that may be in it.

† A striking collection of these has been made by Dr. Pearson, and inserted in his *Exposition of the Creed*, under that clause of it which asserts of the Lord, that "He descended into hell." Some of these are cited by the Rev. S. Noble, in his *Appeal*, &c., pp. 149, 150, 2d ed. Dr. Gilbert Burnet, in his *Exposition of the xxxix Articles*, Art. iii, also says that the latest fathers and the schoolmen held that there was a place to which they gave the peculiar name, *Limbus Patrum*.

philosophy of the Greeks. It is highly probable that such philosophy contributed to the retention of the idea; but it was also discoverable in the Scriptures; and as that philosophy was based on traditions which had a Divine origin, that accusation does not at all weaken the conclusion. We do not, however, mean that the ideas, as they are presented in the history of Jewish and Gentile opinions, were just ideas upon the subject; nor that those of the fathers were always true, or clear: it is evident that this was not the case.* The above facts are adverted to, simply to indicate the antiquity and prevalence of some notion respecting such an intermediate spiritual world. But human authority in spiritual things is nothing, unless its opinions are supported by the testimony of Revelation. We need not stop to inquire, how long any clear ideas upon this subject prevailed among the early Christians; it is well known that they fell into obscurity and perversion, as the Church rose in worldly eminence and power; and the result was, that the idea of the world of spirits was converted into the notion of a purgatorial place, in which, it was supposed, the soul is to be punished for its venial sins, which punishment may continue for any length of time until the day of judgment; and that in order to shorten its duration, the prayers and works of supererogation, of men on earth, the intercession of the saints in heaven, and especially the sacrifice of the mass, are of great efficacy.† Now we know of no such doctrine as this in the Scriptures; and every one, however slightly acquainted with the history of indulgences, is aware of the shameful purposes to which it has been applied.‡ Protestants, therefore, at the time of the Reformation, most properly renounced it as a "fond thing."§ But in abolishing a faith in purgatory, the reformers also extinguished a belief in the intermediate state, on which, by a succession of corruptions, the purgatorial fiction had been raised.

Now in this, we think they proceeded further than the truth required. Purgatory, as a corruption, implies the existence of something that was corrupted; and the best things when per-

* The Jews at one time, had a conceit that the souls of some men continued for a year going up and down in a state of purgation. Plato speaks of a middle sort of men, who, though they had sinned, were yet in a curable condition, and that they went, (after death, we suppose is meant,) into a place to be absolved.— See Dr. Gilbert Burnet's *Exposition of the xxxix Articles*, Art. xxii.

† This is the doctrine of the Church of Rome, as set forth in the councils of Florence and Trent; it is not however, acknowledged by the Greek Church; nor was it developed in Christendom until the sixth century.

‡ Consult the brief article *Tezel* in the *Penny Cyclopædia*.

§ "The reformed divines, to avoid the terrors of purgatory, have entirely taken away the intermediate state; as we are too apt, in avoiding one folly, to run into another."— Dr. T. Burnet *On the State of the Dead*.

verted, are made the worst. It is our duty to reform abuses, but in our attempts to get rid of the false notions of a thing, we should be careful that we do not indiscriminately reject the true ones. This we believe to have been done at the time of the Reformation ; * so that the Protestant churches, in having been deprived of all belief in the existence of an intermediate region in the spiritual world, are left without any information concerning the state of the deceased, between the times of natural death and the final judgment. Hence have arisen many conjectures respecting the soul's residence during this period. Some have supposed that the soul passed, by death, into a state of unconsciousness, during the interval referred to, from which it is to be aroused at the last day ; and consequently, that the place of this unconsciousness must be the grave ! But how unauthorized, by reason or Revelation, is this conceit ! The human soul is an immortal body ; how, then, can it for thousands of years be insensible ? Such a period of unconsciousness can be nothing else than death. But natural death does not put a period to our consciousness of being ; it simply takes away from it the material organism, by which it was manifested in the world. The soul cannot die ; where then, does it live ? Where does it experience its human consciousness of sensation and thought ? Is it to be without an abode ? This would be a wild imagination. Being itself something, we cannot predicate nothing for its dwelling-place. As, then, the soul cannot enter upon its final destination until after judgment, it seems plain that there must be a distinct region in the spiritual world provided for its reception, immediately on its departure from the natural body.

The reasonableness of this conclusion is further evident from what the Scriptures assure us are the characteristics of heaven and hell. Heaven is a state of spiritual blessedness, "and there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." (Rev. xxi. 27.) Hell is a condition of spiritual wretchedness, where there is "darkness," and "weeping," and "gnashing of teeth ;" (Matt. viii. 12 ;) and where nothing that is good or true can ever dwell. But how rarely are the conditions, which prepare men for a residence in either of those worlds, fully displayed in this ! Universal experience proves that the states of men in this life are of a mixed character. Good and evil enter into the composition of all ; though one or the other will always constitute the predominating principle at the time of death, for this had always been so during life. Now when a man dies, he takes with him all his sentiments and loves. As to these things

* See No. xxii of the xxxix Articles of Religion in the Book of Common Prayer.

he is at first precisely what he had been ; and it is upon his state, as derived from these things, that his future judgment is to be pronounced. Now if it is true that good men are not without their imperfections, and that bad men are not destitute of every virtue, then it will follow that when the former die, their imperfections will adhere to them, and will present an obstacle to their immediate ascent to heaven ; and that when the latter die, their virtues will adhere to them, and will present a hinderance to their immediate descent to hell ; it therefore follows, that as their *first* condition in the life to come, cannot be either heaven or hell, (for then they are not judged,) it must be an intermediate region, suited for the reception of the mixed state of all on their first departure from the natural world. " It is not allowable for any one in heaven, nor for any in hell, to have a divided mind, that is, to make one thing the object of his understanding, and another the object of his will ; but that which is the object of any one's will must also be that of his understanding, and that which is the object of his understanding, must also be that of the will. In heaven therefore, every one, the object of whose will is good, must have truth as the object of his understanding. On this account, in the world of spirits, falsities, with the good, are removed, and truths are given them suitable and conformable to their good ; and truths are removed with the evil, and falsities are given them suitable and conformable to their will." (*Heaven and Hell*, No. 425.) If the heavenly or the infernal states of men were fully developed in this life, what necessity would there be for a future judgment ? Doubtless the Divine judgment consists, not only in pronouncing the final destiny of souls, but also in the examination of their characters, and in the separation in them of the good from the evil, the wheat from the tares, the sheep from the goats, and thus to see that they take with them nothing uncongenial with their destiny. To delay the enjoyments of heaven to those who are fully prepared for them in this life, until some distant day of judgment, could not be reconciled with Divine justice to the good ; nor could the interruption of the miseries of the wicked, for some thousands of years, which are to elapse before the popularly expected last day, be made to square with their *everlasting* punishment.

The "last day" is the day of every man's death ; "for it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment." (Heb. ix. 27.) It is the mixed character of man when he dies, which brings him into judgment after death. And need we inquire where is to be the scene of its execution ? If we reflect that the subject of this judgment is to be the state of the human soul, and that this soul is a spiritual body, then it will not be easy to avoid the conclusion, that the scene of that event must

be an intermediate region of the spiritual world into which the soul, in its mixed condition, has first, after the death of the body, taken up its spiritual habitation.

Here, however, an apparent difficulty may arise. If men pass into the other life, with the precise character which they possessed in this, and if such a condition should be an obstacle to their entering at once upon their final destiny in heaven or hell, it may be asked, whether the preparation for that destiny, which is to take place in the world of spirits, does not suppose that world to be another state of probation? We answer, No. It is only the scene of judgment, where the spirits of just men are made perfect; (Heb. xii. 23;) for, as before observed, it is the mixed character of man in that world which presents the condition for that event. Judgment implies, as it has just been stated, a discrimination between the good and evil, and their consequent separation, not only as to the spirits, but also as to principles in them; and if no such condition on the part of the soul existed, there would be no subject for exculpation or condemnation. This natural world is our only probationary place. The good or the evil which has been freely cherished and pursued, so as to become a *predominating* delight in the soul, will be that state into which men will enter, as their final destiny in heaven or hell. The judgment, in the intermediate region of the spiritual world, effects a separation from the soul of every principle which is opposed to its ruling love.* Every adult has some ruling love, which, in reference to the evil, is called the besetting sin; and, in connection with the good, is designated a leading virtue. To gratify these, all the thoughts and actions of men are more or less directed. This may not appear to a superficial observer, but if a man will carefully examine himself he will find that it is so. The ruling love influences the whole mind and conduct, and this it is which constitutes the living quality and predominating character of every one. It is in fact their spiritual individuality, and this is in the continual effort to eject from itself every thing which circumstances from without may have impressed upon it, and which is felt to be of an opposite nature. Thus, although a person may love what is good from an internal principle, he is not unfrequently excited, by external allurements, to gratify some propensity of his fallen nature. This is a circumstance of ordinary occurrence. It is one of the phenomena of Christian experience. The apostle adverted to it when he said, "the flesh

* It may obviate a difficulty to remark, that as infants have not made any evil or false principles their own, by the actual love and life of them, and so cannot have incurred any responsibility, neither judgment nor a residence in the world of spirits can be properly predicable of them. They, doubtless, are at once raised to heaven on their departure hence.

lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other:" (Gal. v. 17 :) and again; "The good that I would, I do not: but the evil that I would not, that I do. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." (Rom. vii. 19, 23.) How seldom, if ever, in this world, is this mixed condition entirely removed from us! How few are they who can pursue the objects of their ruling love, without interruptions arising from the inferior influences of other loves! How frequently is an internal prompting to do some good to others, contaminated by an external wish to benefit ourselves thereby! The ruling love will interpose itself in all we do, and the gratification of this is attended with the most delight, because this is the love which constitutes the actual quality of man. Before he can enter upon his eternal abode, every opposing principle must be removed, in order to provide for the uninterrupted action of his ruling love. For certainly, the spirit of man could not descend to hell with any good adhering to him, nor ascend to heaven with any evil. Now as this separation, and consequent preparation for our final destiny, is not completed in this life; where and by what means are they to be accomplished? We answer, that they must take place in the world of spirits, that being the first common or universal receptacle of all who die, — that also, being the scene of the judgment by which it is effected.*

The Divine judgment discriminates between the interior character of man, as it rises from his ruling love, and all those external inclinations by which its activity may be interrupted or opposed; and they are finally separated, in order that the supreme delight, with its concomitants, may be alone possessed. We conceive that the way in which this is effected, is by an influx of heavenly delight flowing into those sentiments which the soul possesses in agreement with itself. This will be felt by those who are interiorly evil, which evil has been contracted in the world, as entirely opposed to their ruling love: this influx will be rejected by them, and with it, will be renounced all the agreeing sentiments by which it had been enabled to approach, and

* Dr. Jung-Stilling, in his *Theory of Pneumatology*, says, "The universal Christian world, from the very commencement, believed generally in an invisible world of spirits, which was divided into three different regions; heaven, or the place of blessedness, — hell, or the place of torment, — and then a third place, which the Bible calls *hades*, or the receptacle of the dead; in which those souls which were not ripe for either destination, are fully made meet for that to which they most adapted themselves in this life." — *Jackson's Translation*, p. 11.

thereby the soul becomes a mere configuration of iniquity, and passes off to hell. On the other hand, they who are interiorly good, — which good has been cultivated in the world, — will receive this influx with the utmost joy ; it will be embraced as the supreme thing of the ruling love ; and all that is contrary to it will be thoroughly rejected ; as this takes place, the soul will become a form of angelic intelligence, and therefore be raised to heaven.

These phenomena are taught us in the Scriptures. The fact of the separation of the good from the evil principles in men, at the time of judgment, is plainly adverted to by John the Baptist, who said of the Lord's coming, and of the judgment for which He came, that His "fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner ; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." (Matt. iii. 12.) The Lord also, when treating of His judgment, said, "He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." (Matt. xxv. 32.) In these passages, the wheat and the chaff, the sheep and the goats, do not simply mean those souls whose general characters may be designated by those expressions ; but they also signify those particular principles of good and evil, by which individual souls may be distinguished ; and consequently, the separation treated of, will also refer to the separation of those principles. It was in reference to the circumstance of each class of souls being, by the judgment, brought into the uninterrupted activity of their ruling love, that it is written, "whosoever hath, to him shall be given ; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he seemeth to have." (Luke viii. 18.) By this is plainly meant, that at the time of judgment, they who have goodness as an interior principle of their life, will, by the separation of all opposing sentiments, be qualified to receive a more abundant share, and so be received into heaven : whereas, they who have evil as an interior principle of their life, will have removed from them all the good which they seemed to have, and thereby pass off to hell. And surely, the scene of those events must be the world of spirits, because it is the state of the soul, which, after death, is to be their subject.

These considerations, indicating the existence of a world of spirits, as an intermediate region between heaven and hell, in which men are to receive God's judgment after death, are, we think, founded in reason — reasonable views respecting the character of man at the time of his decease, and reasonable conclusions concerning the mode of God's judgment. We believe also, that these sentiments are in full conformity with the teachings of Revelation, for we hold that right reason, and God's Scrip-

tures, are the offsprings of the same high mind, and that the Lord intends to conduct us by them to a sensible belief and practical acknowledgment of the truth.

This, however, leads us more directly to those Scriptural evidences, by which the existence of a world of spirits is to be proved. But here we have to observe, that the common translation of our Bible was made by persons, who, from a recollection of the abuses to which the fiction of purgatory had led, held that there was no intermediate region. They performed this work for a church, which, in formally renouncing one abuse, had forgotten to retain the knowledge of the thing which had been abused; * and therefore it is to be expected, that this circumstance would exercise some influence over the rendering of those passages of the Word, in which that doctrine is inculcated. Nevertheless, there are numerous Scripture facts, through which this doctrine will be found to appear beautifully transparent.

The Hebrew word, שְׁאוֹל *sheol*, it is well known by competent scholars, is sometimes translated *hell*, and at other times, the *grave*. And there are some cases in which serious doubts are entertained, whether either of those terms expresses the true sense of the original. When the mere English reader of the Old Testament meets with the words *hell*, and *grave*, he little suspects that these two expressions have only one and the same word in Hebrew. Yet, such is the fact.† His ideas of hell are very different from his notions of the grave; and he cannot but feel some difficulty in seeing how both can be fairly represented by a single term. Had they been synonymes, the embarrassment would be less, but this is not the case; the idea of the grave, in which the dead body is to be interred, has nothing in common with the idea of hell, in which the living soul is to be tormented. It is admitted, by learned men, that the term *sheol*, in very many cases, does not, and indeed cannot, from the context, mean either hell or the grave, in the proper sense of those expressions; and

* Dr. Jung-Stilling remarks, that the Protestant Church "carried this point too far, to do away with *hades* together with purgatory." — Jackson's Translation of *Theory of Pneumatology*, p. 18.

† The explanation which is given of this word, denoting two such different ideas is, that the ancients among whom it was used, regarded the *grave*, which is considered to have been the primary signification of *sheol*, as a place of great awe and gloom, and that from this in process of time, it came also to denote that more awful and gloomy place, which is the everlasting abode of the wicked, and hence its twofold meaning. We can understand how a word in *ordinary language* may have its signification changed, and when new meanings arise, some difficulty may be experienced to determine its precise import, when met with in some ancient documents; but we do not see the force of such an argument in reference to the *extraordinary language* of the Scriptures, which has not been selected in conformity to the change of Jewish prejudices, but chosen by the laws of inspiration.

as the doctrine of an intermediate state was acknowledged by those with whom the Hebrew was a living language, there can be no well-founded doubt, that *sheol* was one of the terms by which it was expressed. Still, it is not meant to be denied, that there are passages in which "*sheol*" appears to have been employed to denote both hell and the grave, as the following instance will show:—"The wicked shall be turned into *hell*:" (Psalm ix. 17 :) "Let not his hoar head go down to the *grave* in peace;" (1 Kings ii. 6;) nevertheless, those passages, and others which are relied upon as evidence for these two meanings of the word, are few in comparison with those in which it is plain that neither hell nor the grave can, in the strict sense of the term, be meant by the original. But *examples* will serve to show this fact better than verbal criticism.

When Jacob wept over the reported decease of his son Joseph, whom his brethren had sold to the Midianitish merchantmen, he is said to have exclaimed, "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." (Gen. xxxvii. 35.) The original word here translated grave, is *sheol*. But who does not see that the patriarch could not have expected to find his son in any natural sepulchre, to which he himself might be consigned. He doubtless had more elevated and sensible conceptions of man, after death, than to have entertained so crude a hope; nor could the Divine Spirit, under whose influence the sentiment was expressed, have designed by it, to communicate so irrational a notion. It may be said that the statement simply means, that Jacob would go down to the grave mourning in consequence of his son's decease; but this is not the idea which the terms of the Scriptures convey. Look at the wording of the sentence; examine its construction, and it will be found to express a more recondite fact. By the word *sheol*, he did not mean the grave as a tenement for the dead body, but the first common receptacle for the living soul. And can it be doubted, that if the patriarch had died under the influence of an intense desire to behold his son, that he would have been gratified in that respect, on the supposition of Joseph having been really dead? Do not Christian parents now cherish the hope of meeting, in the other life, those offsprings of their love who may have gone there before them? Is this hope a delusion? Is the desire to meet hereafter, those we love, a mockery of the imagination? No! it is a reality, of which, however, the world of spirits must be the appropriate scene, because that is the first common receptacle for men who die. The meetings which there take place between departed spirits who have loved each other in the world, can be continued only so far as there is an internal similarity of state among them. If Jacob had met his son in *sheol*, and each were principled in that mutual love which

originates in the Lord, they would both have been elevated into heaven at the time of judgment, but if they were not so principled, or were in opposite states, as to their interior loves, they would soon have separated, and each would have been adjudged to that final destination which his state entailed.

Again ; Jonah, speaking of the peculiar condition which he experienced while in the belly of the fish, says, " I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me ; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice."* Here the word which is rendered *hell*, is *sheol*, the same as that which, in the preceding case, is translated grave ; but as it is plain that Jacob could not have meant the grave, as the final resting-place of his natural body, so it seems certain that Jonah could not have meant hell, as a place of final punishment for the spiritual body. The passage represents him as thanking God for his deliverance from some specific spiritual state which the word *sheol* is employed to express. What was this state ? If he had been in the belly of a fish, in the depths of the Mediterranean Sea, it is evident that all the ordinary functions of his physical body must have been suspended ; what then must have been the condition of his soul ? This undying body of humanity could not experience any suspension of its spiritual life ; and therefore, under the circumstances in which his natural body was placed, it must have become more immediately sensible of its presence in, and connection with, the spiritual world ; which, however, could not have been heaven, because of the disobedience of which it had been so recently guilty ; nor hell, because it still retained the grace by which it could pray unto the Lord ; it therefore must have been that region between them, which we have called the world of spirits.

The natural body is brought into a state of death, when the respiratory motion of the lungs, and the systolic action of the heart, completely cease. These two motions are the natural bonds by which the soul is connected with the body, but when these are broken, the soul is delivered from its connection with it ; yet the soul continues to live, because it is the eternal, undying, spiritual form of man. These are the phenomena which

* Jonah ii. 2. Some consider that the circumstance in the history of Jonah here referred to, did not really take place, but that it was a sort of dream or prophetic vision. The editor of Calmet's Dictionary interprets the word יָם rendered a fish, not a fish, but a vessel, float, or raft, which might have had the image of a fish attached to its head or stern. See *Fragment* cxlv, also, *Less, Grimm, Rosenmuller, and other German critics*. We, however, see no reason to explain away the historical sense. As a miracle, it was no more extraordinary than many others which are related, and perhaps it would admit of being more easily explained on scientific principles, than any of those which occurred in Egypt.

take place in all cases of actual death ; but in the case of Jonah this did not occur, and, therefore, the bonds were not *broken* by which the soul was held in its connection with the body ; nevertheless the two motions of bodily life must have been *suspended* ; and therefore, the spirit, as it was said, must have become more directly sensible of its spiritual existence and connection, which, for the reasons above assigned, could not have been in heaven or in hell ; but in that great gulf which exists between them.

But look at the case of one who had actually departed from the world by death. After Samuel was dead, it is distinctly related, that he appeared to a woman who had a familiar spirit, and also to Saul. (1 Sam. xxviii. 11-20.) Now it is plain that Samuel, upon this occasion, must have appeared in his spiritual person, and also that the spiritual eyes of the woman, and of the king, must have been opened to behold him. Where, then, was the specific scene of this appearance ? It is evident, from the whole narrative, that it was neither in heaven nor hell, and therefore, the only alternative left is, that it must have been in that intermediate region which exists between them.

Take another case which bears upon this point. At the period when Christianity was established, David had been dead a thousand years, and yet Peter then distinctly said, "David is not ascended into the heavens." (Acts ii. 34.) Where, then, had he been dwelling during this period ? It could not have been in the opposite kingdom, if heaven were designed for his final residence ; nor could he have been in a state of unconsciousness for so long a time, without admitting that such a duration of insensibility to being is no interruption to immortality — a notion which will hardly be pretended : is it not plain, then, that he had been dwelling in the world of spirits ?

Upon a subsequent occasion, Peter refers to another circumstance of a similar character. Treating of the resurrection of Christ, he says, he was "quicken^d by the spirit ; by which, also, he went and preached unto the spirits in prison ; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing."* In this language, we are informed that the spirits of certain persons

* 1 Pet. iii. 18-20. Dr. Kitto remarks concerning this text, that it affords "one of the seemingly strongest arguments for the opinion under consideration ;" i. e., an intermediate spiritual world ; still, being unwilling to admit this view of it, he further says, "this passage must be allowed to present great difficulties ;" *Bib. Cyc. Art. Hades*. It however, presents those difficulties, only to those who have made up their minds to deny the existence of an intermediate state. The best authorities in the English Church are compelled to admit, from this text, an intermediate state of some sort, though they feel hesitation about giving it distinct expression, because the doctrines of their Church had denounced purgatory. — See *Bishop Hors-*

had, from the days of Noah until the resurrection of the Lord, been waiting for some deliverance which was the result of that circumstance. Now, in what department of the spiritual world were these expectant spirits dwelling? It was not heaven, for that is a state of freedom, and not a "prison." Nor could it have been hell, for there all expectation is abandoned: why preach unto the lost — those who have already rejected all God's teachings? Doubtless, then, the scene of this transaction must have been that intermediate region, through which all must pass, and in which all are judged. It is because, in that world, all mankind are detained to receive their judgment, that the apostle denominates it a prison. That term is a rhetorical figure, drawn from the circumstance of prisons reserving their committed inhabitants for trial and judgment by the lawful authorities. It is from this use of the expression, that the good, in the world of spirits, previous to their judgment, may be called "the prisoners of hope," (Zech. ix. 12,) and their subsequent elevation into heaven is spoken of as the deliverance of the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. (See Isaiah lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18.)

A very large proportion of the phenomena which were presented to the vision of the prophets, were such as could not, from their very nature, belong to any other than an intermediate region of the spiritual world.* They were certainly objects of spiritual sight, for it is plainly written, that the prophets were in the spirit at the time they were permitted to behold them. A large number of those objects could be named which, it is evident, do not belong to either heaven or hell. Take, as examples, the four, great beasts which Daniel saw come up from the sea; the vision of horses among the-myrtle trees, which was experienced by Zechariah; and specially, the vision of the valley of dry bones, which Ezekiel saw when he was in the spirit. We do not now stop to speak of the signification of these phenomena; our design, in referring to them, is simply to indicate that they were spiritual objects, seen by the spiritual eyes of men in some department of the spiritual world, which was neither heaven nor hell. Ezekiel writes, "the hand of the Lord fell upon me — and the Spirit lifted me up *between* earth and heaven;" (Eze. viii. 1-3;) and Zechariah says, "the Angel that talked with me went forth, and said unto me, lift up now thine eyes and see what it is that

ley's Sermons, vol. ii. pp. 177, 186. *Pearson on the Creed*, pp. 225-252, and *Pool's Synopsis*.

* Consult 2 Kings, chap. vi. 17; Eze. chap. ii. iii. viii. ix. x. xxxvii. xli. xliii. xlv. xlvii; Daniel vii. 3-8, viii. 3-12, xii. 7; Zech. i. ii. iii. iv. v. vi. See, also, the eighth chapter of this work, on "visions and dreams," for some other remarks on the above subjects.

goeth forth. And I said what is it? And he said, this is an ephah that goeth forth. Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came out two women, and the wind was in their wings; (for they had wings like a stork;) and they lifted up the ephah *between* the earth and the heaven." (Zech. v. 5, 9.) In these two passages we are distinctly informed that there is a spiritual state and place between the earth and the heaven; that this is not hell is evident, and therefore, there cannot be any other reasonable conclusion than that it is an intermediate world of spirits.

But we will pass on from the Old Testament intimations respecting this doctrine, to a consideration of the more direct evidences of it which are afforded by the New. Here, however, a verbal criticism again requires our attention. The word, which in our English version of the New Testament, is commonly rendered *hell*, is in the original Greek *ᾠδης*, *hades*. But the learned are not agreed upon the correctness of this translation. Some see that it cannot be uniformly maintained, without doing violence to the general sense of the context; while others perceive in it a dim allusion to the doctrine under consideration. It is certain that the term *hell* does not convey to the Christian mind the same idea that the word *hades* did to the Greeks, when the New Testament was written. Josephus, the Jewish historian, who lived at that period, has written, in Greek, a distinct treatise upon this subject. And this work he commences in these remarkable words, "Now, as to *hades*, wherein the souls of the righteous and unrighteous are detained, it is necessary to speak of it."* The description which he subsequently gives of this place, is by no means satisfactory; nevertheless, in him, we have an authority, who lived when the New Testament was written, and whose vernacular tongue was Greek, expressly telling us that the meaning of the word *hades*, was the place "wherein the souls of the righteous and unrighteous are detained;" consequently, the term then signified that which we have called the world of spirits. This, certainly, is the classical signification of the term, and it is only the latitude with which it is generally employed in the New Testament, and the context in which it occurs, which renders it proper to be translated *hell*.† There

* See Whiston's *Josephus*, vol. ii. p. 561, M'Gowan's edition. The meaning of this term *hades*, as understood by modern scholars, is the *unseen world*; but I do not perceive the propriety of attaching such an idea to a word which has been seen.

† Other terms are sometimes employed to express the very worst condition of the lost, these are *Gehenna*, and *Tartaros*; the former occurs in Matthew v. 22, and Mark ix. 47, where it is translated "hell fire," and the latter in 2 Peter ii. 4, where it is translated "hell." It seems, however, from the circumstances to which they are applied, that a deeper kind of

are, however, some cases in which the impropriety of this is evident, and in which the idea of an intermediate state is plainly expressed by it.

For instance, in the Revelation it is said, that "death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 13, 14.) The original word, which in these two cases is translated hell, is *hades*. But who does not see considerable obscurity in the idea of hell, regarded as the final residence of the lost, delivering up its dead to judgment? the notion seems to involve the extraordinary principle of punishing first and judging afterwards.* So again, who does not see that the notion of casting hell into a lake of fire, is not at all of an intelligible character? The narrative in which these sentences occur, plainly shows that *hades* is there employed to indicate the existence of an intermediate spiritual world. This idea is requisite to explain the narrative; for in the same chapter, John gives a detailed account of the judgment which he saw performed. He says, in the verse immediately preceding those which have been quoted, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Now it is certain, that the event thus related, did not take place on earth; it is equally evident that it did not transpire in heaven or hell, for these are the places of final destination, which judgment, "according to their works," was to determine; and yet it cannot be denied, that it took place in some region of the spiritual world, because John was in the spirit to behold it; where then, could it have been but in that intermediate place, which is the common receptacle for all who die, and where all await their sentence according to the evidence written in their book of life? their book of life

hell is meant than that of *hades*, such as that which Milton makes Satan speak of:—

"And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me, opens wide."

Paradise Lost, book iv.

* Nevertheless, this is involved in the notion entertained by some on this subject. "It is admitted," says Dr. Kitto, *Bib. Cyc. Art. Hades*, "that the Scriptures represent the happiness of the righteous as incomplete till after the resurrection." "At the moment of death, the disembodied spirits of the redeemed ascend to heaven and continue there till the resurrection." Upon this principle the disembodied spirits of the unredeemed will descend to hell and continue there till the resurrection. Now if the resurrection contemplated is for the purpose of judgment, then it must follow from the above notion, that the good are rewarded, and the evil are punished before the time of judgment!

being the interior state of their affections and thoughts — a book which they have freely written during their lifetime in the world — and thus they are judged by evidence which they themselves have prepared.*

This view of the case, at once, illuminates the sentence that *hades* delivered up its dead: it shows us that the inhabitants of the world of spirits, who had experienced natural death, were brought to judgment; we see also, that by *hades* being cast into a lake of fire, is denoted the final destiny of those in that world, in whom wicked principles constituted a predominance of character. *Hades*, in this case, not only denoting the intermediate world in general, but also the wicked state of those parties on whom was executed so terrible a sentence.

Another circumstance in which the intermediate world is plainly indicated by the original expressions, is that which is related of the Lord after His resurrection. The Psalmist, in prophetic reference to that event, said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," (Psalm xvi. 10,) *i. e.*, in *sheol*: and the Apostle, in applying this prediction to the fact in which it was fulfilled, says, that "his soul was not left in hell," *i. e.*, in *hades*. (Acts ii. 31.) Now the facts that the Hebrew word, *sheol*, denotes an intermediate region in the spiritual world, and that it is rendered by the Apostle, into Greek, by the word *hades*, which we have seen conveys a corresponding idea, are, we think, indisputable proofs of the doctrine under consideration.

But if we look a little deeper into the subject to which these passages refer, we shall be enabled to see the truth of this conclusion in a brighter light. What was the soul of which they speak? Doubtless it was that Divine personation of the Lord, by which He could be seen by spirits; in which He could approach them; and through the assumption of which, He designed to save mankind to the uttermost. It will hardly be pretended that this was in hell, considered as the destination of

* It may be proper here to observe, that the resurrection of man takes place in his spiritual body, immediately after the decease of his natural body, 1 Cor. xv. 44. The latter is flesh and blood, and therefore cannot inherit the kingdom of God; it is corruption, and therefore cannot inherit a spiritual world, where dwelleth incorruption, 1 Cor. xv. 50. It is of dust, which shall "return unto the earth as it was; and the spirit unto God who gave it," Eccl. xii. 7. The resurrection of the *material* body is an unreasonable and unscriptural dogma. The Scriptures abundantly teach the doctrine of the resurrection of man after death, but they nowhere teach the resurrection of the *material* body. The *last day*, which is sometimes spoken of in connection with this event, is the last day of every individual man's lifetime in the world. When he dies, he immediately rises with his spiritual body into the world of spirits, and there, in the process of time, he undergoes his judgment. See an elaborate section on the subject of the resurrection, in the *Appeal* of the Rev. S. Noble.

those who are irredeemably lost ; there could be no object in such a presence ; but that He was in an intermediate region, called *sheol* and *hades*, is evident from the passages cited. This, indeed, seems to be affirmed by all the phenomena, which are recorded to have attended the Lord's appearances after His resurrection. In all the instances in which he was seen after that event, there are mentioned some circumstances, which plainly evince that those who beheld Him were granted a distinct and special privilege, which was not common to every one. He was not visible to the physical eyes of ordinary men ; He could not have been in hell as the eternal abode of the wicked ; and His ascension into heaven was a spectacle that did not take place until six weeks after His resurrection. Where, then, are we to seek for Him in the interval of time which elapsed between those two events ? He was living ; He was frequently seen — seen by the spiritual eyes of men, opened by Him for the purpose — He therefore must have been in *hades*, or the world of spirits, and His purpose there was to complete the judgment for which He came into the world ; one instance of which judgment was, His preaching to the spirits in prison, related by the Apostle, and above adverted to.

Another case is thus related : — “ And the graves were opened ; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves, after His resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many.” (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.) This is usually considered to describe an occurrence which took place, with the physical bodies of men in the natural city of Jerusalem. But a little reflection must show this to be a mistaken view of the subject. The circumstances of the raising of Lazarus, and the widow's son, are by no means parallel cases : they lived again in their natural bodies but they died again ; they were restored to their friends, and were known to their enemies. The Jews sought Lazarus to put him to death. (John xii. 10.) If “ the bodies of the saints ” had been natural bodies, they must have died again ; but of this there is no intimation. The scope and meaning of the narrative is to inform us, that they were raised to die no more. Besides, the narrative states that they “ went into the Holy City ; ” this is commonly understood to have been Jerusalem ; but that place, which had so long been the residence of a wicked people, who had so recently preferred the liberation of a robber to the Prince of Peace — who had united to put the innocent to death, and frightfully executed their terrible conspiracy — could not have been “ the Holy City.” Surely, that was no place of safety, protection, or blessing, for saints. Moreover, *sleep* does not necessarily mean *death*, for the Apostle said, “ awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ

shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.) Nor does the grave absolutely mean either a pit in the earth, or a hole in the rock, because we find David exclaiming, "O Lord, thou hast brought my soul out of the grave." Matthew is the only Evangelist by whom this circumstance is related; nor is it even alluded to by any of the preaching, or in any of the epistles, of the Apostles, an omission which could hardly have occurred, if the natural world had been the scene of the transaction. If that had been the case, the circumstance must have been extensively known; the Apostles must have been well acquainted with it; they would scarcely have failed to notice it; and Jerusalem would doubtless have been moved with much amazement by the occurrence. But nothing of the sort is mentioned. The subject is just noticed as an episode among the events which took place at the time of the Lord's resurrection, and it is related incidentally, in the narrative which is describing the phenomena which occurred at the crucifixion! These considerations clearly show, that the narrative ought not to be understood of a physical event. We believe the scene of this transaction to have been in the world of spirits, and not in the world of nature; and that it was the result of one of the judgments, favorable to the good, which there and then took place. It was accomplished *after* the Lord's resurrection; because, by that event, He procured for Himself the means of special presence there. The "bodies of the saints" were not the dead corpses, but the living souls of virtuous men, existing in the world of spirits. They are said to have "slept," to describe the state of obscurity in which their understandings were with respect to genuine truth; which obscurity had been induced upon them by the unfavorable condition of the Church, under which they had lived during the time of their probation in the world. They are stated to have "come out of their graves," to inform us that they were delivered from that obscurity; whereupon, they "went into the Holy City and appeared unto many," that is, they were raised into the heavenly Jerusalem, and there associated with those who were principled in similar goodness to themselves.

How reasonable is this! when the manners and opinions of an age become corrupt, men of sincere minds and upright purposes, do not escape their dangerous influence. Their external views and general conduct, are brought into some conformity with the unfavorable circumstances by which they are surrounded, but their interior feelings and intentions, are guided by higher views of life and duty. Their motives and desires may be sincere and good, though the period may be unfavorable for their right development. Excellence of interior character has not unfrequently existed in flagitious times. Men, sincere in what they do know

of God and duty, have embraced religions that are false, and also followed their practices without destroying the integrity of their interior nature. Doubtless there are good men among the millions who have received the religion of Mahomet; and also among those who have lived in pagan nations. So also, there were superior characters among those who embraced the corruptions of the scribes and pharisees. Simeon and Nathaniel may, perhaps, be safely named as being among them. So far as such persons were interiorly good, they were in the possession of qualifications for heaven, but the corrupted religions with which they had come in contact, had exercised an unfavorable influence upon their characters; and this constituted a *grave* in which their interior excellence lay intombed, and out of which they had to come before they could enter into heaven. Every one may see, that when the falses of religion influence the external character of a man, who is internally good, that they, as it were, become the sepulchre of those superior things which are in his inmost life. Now, man, dying in this state, will take with him the *whole* of his character into the other life — his external persuasions as well as his internal intentions; and so he carries with him not only his internal sentiments of love and duty, but also their external graves of false persuasions and opinions, and in this condition he must remain until the time of judgment; but by that event — because such persons are interiorly good — they will be raised out of their graves — they will be delivered from all the false impressions by which light and loveliness had been interred, and then conducted into heaven. They who will carefully reflect upon these considerations will possess the means for a rational, and certainly Scriptural view of the narrative before us; but without the admission of an intermediate state, it is entirely beyond the reach of any satisfactory explanation.

It was circumstances of this nature, to which the Lord referred, when He said, “verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.” (John v. 25.) In this passage, we are plainly informed that the dead were, at that very time, in the process of hearing His voice. The hour is not only coming, but it *now is*. The dead spoken of, were not simply those who were living in the world in a state of insensibility to heavenly things, but they were actually those who had passed by natural death into the spiritual world; for the subject treated of is concerning the judgment, as may be seen at the twenty-seventh verse; and at the two following, the Lord is described as saying, “marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves, shall hear His voice and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that

have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The event here spoken of was not one that was to transpire some thousands of years afterwards; He evidently spoke of it as a circumstance near at hand; and we have no doubt that the case respecting the bodies of the saints, above adverted to, was one of its realizations. "The Jews, *i. e.*, the pharisees among them, entertained some idea concerning a resurrection at some distant time; and the sister of Lazarus said of him, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (John xi. 24.) If the Lord had been speaking of a distant resurrection at the end of the world, there would have been nothing peculiar in His observation to excite surprise; but He was treating of a fact that was new and marvellous: the hour of the circumstances of which He spoke was not only coming, but it was at that very time arrived.

Jesus declared, that the performance of a judgment was one of the purposes for which He came into the world, (John ix. 39,) and speaking of that phenomenon, He said, "now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out;" (John xii. 31;) "the prince of this world is judged:" (John xvi. 11;) "be of good cheer, I have overcome the world:" (John xvi. 33;) "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." (Luke x. 18.) The judgment here spoken of is said to be of this world, because it is the undue love of the things of this world, which has brought mankind into a state, on which judgment has to be executed. Nevertheless, the scene of it is not in nature. Nothing, answering to the phenomena declared by those passages, was observable in the natural world. With the exception of the miracles, all things proceeded in their usual way, and yet the Lord distinctly informs us, that those extraordinary circumstances were actually transpiring. Where, then, was the scene of their occurrence? It was evidently in the world of spirits — that first common receptacle of the human soul, after the decease of its physical body — that region of the world to come, in which humanity is judged.

Under this view of the scene of judgment, the admitted difficulties of the above passages, are at once removed. (Consult the *Commentators*.) When the Lord said that all which "are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth," He could not mean dead corpses in the earth; for they can hear no voice; they are not capable of motion; therefore, His reference must have been to those living souls, who had passed by death into the world of spirits, but who were there in states of obscurity with regard to genuine truth. They who are in the obscurity of false sentiments, arising from the unfavorable teachings of the perverted Church under which they have lived, but who, nevertheless, have done good from a large and loving heart, will, at

the time of judgment, come out of that obscurity and be raised to heaven;—come forth from their graves, and experience the resurrection of life; while they who are in the obscurity of falsehood, and at the same time principled in an evil heart, will be brought forth from their graves, in the process of the judgment by which they are made sensible of their enormity, and so be made to experience the resurrection of damnation.

But there are other evidences respecting the existence of a world of spirits to be adduced. The promise which Jesus made to the penitent thief upon the cross, cannot be intelligibly explained without it. The Lord said unto him, “verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” (Luke xxiii. 43.) Now where is paradise? That it is a definite place in the spiritual world, for the reception of the living soul when it shall have departed from the body, must be evident. Both Jesus and the penitent thief were to be in it that very day, on which their bodies died upon the cross; and doubtless, they were to be in it in a state of living, personal, and spiritual identity; it is this idea which gives intelligibility to the promise. Where, then, was to be the scene of this consciousness of living, so soon after the physical body had expired. No one supposes that it was hell,* though many have imagined that it was heaven; but this is an evident mistake. The Lord, the third day after His crucifixion, declared to Mary in the garden that (John xx. 17) He was not yet ascended; and, as before observed, it was six weeks subsequent to that event, before His ascension into heaven was accomplished. (Consult the *Chronologists*.) Is it not certain, then, that paradise expresses some idea respecting an intermediate spiritual world? It appears to us, from the fact that it was neither heaven nor hell, that the existence of such a world is, from the Lord’s promise, placed beyond the reach of rational disputation. Tertullian, Origen, Chrysostom, and other ancient Fathers, so considered it; and no one pretends to deny that it must mean a state of the soul, living in a condition, separated from the dead body. (See Bishop Horsley on this subject. *Sermons*, vol. ii. p. 168.)

* The third of the thirty-nine articles of the “Establishment,” says “it is to be believed, that He went down to hell;” there is also a clause in the creed inaccurately ascribed to the Apostles, which says “He descended into hell,” but these are ideas for which there is no warranty in the Scriptures. None of the Fathers in the first ages, such as Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens, or Origen, in the abstracts of the Christian faith which they have given us, mention any thing like this; nor indeed, was it known to the Church until the beginning of the fifth century, more than a hundred years after the Nicene Council, and therefore we do not find this clause in the Nicene Creed, nor in that which is ascribed to Athanasius. Dr. Burnet in his exposition of the xxxix Articles, and Dr. Pearson on the Creed, hesitate to affirm what those statements assert. Those authorities were prevented from declaring the true meaning of those clauses, because “orthodoxy” required that they should repudiate an intermediate state.

Again; John says, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long dost thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth — and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." (Rev. iv. 9-11.) In this passage, the Apostle distinctly asserts that he saw the souls of departed martyrs; — he describes their situation, relates that they were in the expectation of judgment, and informs us that they were told that they should rest for a little season, until their hopes could be fulfilled. Now where was the scene of this remarkable occurrence? That it was in some department in the spiritual world is plain, for John's spiritual eyes were opened to behold it; and they were the *souls* of departed martyrs who were seen. That it was not heaven or hell is evident, for they had not yet been brought to judgment. The only conclusion, therefore, at which we can arrive from these facts is, that it was the intermediate world of spirits. The Apostle describes the situation of those souls to have been under the altar; because the altar, as being that place on which acceptable offerings were presented to the Lord, was representative of heaven, where genuine worship of the Lord alone prevails. Thus they were under heaven; — heaven being above; and therefore, their situation, because it certainly was not hell, must have been the intermediate region.

Many other passages, specifically illustrative and confirmatory of this doctrine, could be easily selected from the Apocalypse. A very considerable portion of that remarkable book treats of this middle region of the spiritual world at a certain time — of the judgment to be effected there, — of the raising of the good into heaven and the removal of the wicked into hell after that event — of restraining the malignant influences of these latter upon men, and of causing a happier influence from the former to operate in the world for the promotion of virtue, and the propagation of intelligence. (The reader is referred to the following: chap. i. 10, iv. 1, vii. 1, viii. 10, ix. 1, 2, xi. 12, xii. 5, xiii. 6, 11, xvi. 16, xvii. 3, xviii. 1, xix. 17-21, xx. 1-3, 7-9, and xxi. 10.) As before observed, a considerable portion of the visions of the prophets were sights of such objects as were extant in the intermediate world, and those objects were symbols of the states by which its inhabitants were, at those times, distinguished. Unless recourse be had to such a fact, those visions will not admit of any rational or consistent explanation; but by means of it, the subjects of such visions receive a new lucidity, which serves to confirm the truth of that philosophical principle indicated at the

commencement of this chapter; namely, that just views of the condition of man, at the time of his departure from this world, require a belief in the existence of that world of spirits for his first reception, which, we think, we have now also proven, from the Scriptures, to exist.

Man is said to die when his physical body is no longer in a state capable of manifesting the existence of the soul in the natural world. The soul, however, continues to live, because it is immortal, and therefore, cannot die. It lives, not as a vapor, or a breath, but as a living, spiritual, human, form. It cannot go directly to its everlasting home; that state is not entered on till after judgment, it must, then, as before remarked, have a place in which to dwell, and where the true assize is held: and what imagination, aided by the suggestions of the Scriptures, can point out another place than that which the idea of an intermediate world supplies? * Men cannot go from one place to another without passing through the space which intervenes. Neither can they rise from one state to another, without entering upon that which exists between them. Between two opposites, there must exist an intermediate. This seems to be a universal fact. It is observable between fire and ice; light and darkness; height and depth; also between vice and virtue; wisdom and folly; industry and idleness; likewise between mind and matter; reason and instinct; love and hatred; why then, should the Church hesitate to acknowledge the existence of an intermediate between heaven and hell? It was thrown aside by the Reformers in their haste to rid themselves, and Protestantism, of the enormities of the Romish purgatory. There is, indeed, no such state, or place, as that which this name is now understood to indicate; and therefore, it was proper to denounce it; but in overlooking the fact that there is a world of spirits for the reception of man on his first departure hence, the truth has suffered.

The considerations, then, which we have presented on this interesting subject — drawn, as they have been, from the orderly necessity of the case, from the testimony of the Scriptures, and from the opinions of the ancients, compel us, in yielding satisfaction to the demands of reason, and the requirements of Revelation, to say, and to believe, that there is a region in the spiritual world which is neither heaven nor hell, but an intermediate state or place between them; and consequently, that it is the scene in which man's book of life is opened, and where the

* "I think the doctrine of an intermediate state can never be effectually extirpated, so long as a belief of a separate soul is retained. For while that is supposed to exist independently of the body, it will not be easily imagined to sleep along with it, but will be thought to enjoy more or less of consciousness of its existence." — Dr. Priestley's *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 425.

Lord performs His judgment; raising the good into heaven, by means of the virtues which they have affectionately loved; and removing the wicked into hell, by means of the evils which they have voluntarily acquired. It is not, however, to be supposed, that before the time of judgment comes, the good and the evil constitute a mixed, or indiscriminating crowd. Men have the disposition to separate, even in this life, from those who have principles which they do not love, and they do not lose this disposition on their passage into the world of spirits. It will induce, even there, certain arrangements of spiritual society. They who have goodness, as a ruling affection, will doubtless separate themselves from those whose interior delights are evil. Although the wise and the pious, the murderer and the thief, when they die, pass alike into the world of spirits, yet who can hesitate to believe, that on their arrival there, their internal dissimilarities will cause them to separate, and induce each to seek society in agreement with himself; and thus, that the virtuous will be drawn towards that portion of the world of spirits which is nearest heaven; and which is described as being "under the altar," and also "paradise;" while the vicious will be attracted to the opposite quarter nearest hell, where he who is called Abaddon, and Apollyon, reigns. (Rev. ix. 11.) (By those names, both in the Hebrew and the Greek tongue, are signified the destroyer; and that which is destroyed in the wicked, is the little truth and good they might have possessed, but which had no agreement with their ruling vicious loves.) They whose states of good and evil are so nearly balanced as to admit of alternation, may be considered as occupying a more central position, until the time of judgment.

And is it not reasonable to suppose that the period of duration, of the souls of men in this intermediate world, will be regulated by the nature and extent of the good or the evil which constitutes their characters? Doubtless, those who are both internally and externally good, will very soon be raised to heaven; while those who are internally and externally evil, will not be long before they pass off to hell. It is, however, highly probable that there are those who die, whose internals and externals are not in such states of close agreement; these, therefore, must remain a longer or a shorter period according to the nature and extent of that dissimilarity; if good actually predominates, judgment will finally raise them into some of the lower mansions of our heavenly Father's home; but if evil has obtained the rule, judgment will be followed by their removal into some corresponding society in hell.

There are some other particulars relating to the world of spirits, of considerable importance to a right understanding of

those general judgments which the Scriptures relate to have taken place upon several occasions, particularly at those remarkable periods when the respective churches treated of in the Word, were brought to their end; but these are subjects on which we cannot enter. Our object has not been to treat of judgment, but principally to indicate the existence of that region in the spiritual world in which it is to be accomplished.

The provision of an intermediate spiritual world, for our reception after death, is, we think, an act of God's great mercy and wisdom; adapted as it is to those requirements of the human soul which have arisen out of the fallen condition of our race. Men should show their sense of the Divine benevolence, and their admiration of its laws, by cultivating the two principles of the love of God above all things, and of their neighbor as themselves. The states which such affections will fix upon the soul, will, on their entrance into the other life, speedily open heaven, with all its intelligence and joys, and associate them with those distinguished characters to whom the Lord says, "Come ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matt. xxv. 34.)

CHAPTER XIV.

HEAVEN AND HELL, INTERIOR STATES OF THE HUMAN SOUL, INDUCED BY THE RECEPTION OR REJECTION OF THE DI- VINE PRINCIPLES OF LOVE AND WISDOM.

ARGUMENT.—The natural signification of the terms Heaven and Hell. Contemplation of the natural heavens calculated to awaken exalted sentiments respecting the creation. Heaven and hell properly mean the final residence for the good and the bad, after death. Some notions on these subjects have always prevailed among all people. The ideas entertained by the ancient Gentiles on those points. The revelation made to the Noetic people the true source of all such ideas. All the ancient nations had a theology built on the substratum that man lives after death. Correct ideas on this fact were lost when the Lord came into the world; restored by the vouchsafement of the Gospel. The Apostolic sentiments on those subjects corrupted, and at this day there are no clear teachings in the Church respecting them. Difficulties which have arisen from this uncertainty. Heaven, an interior state of happiness, arising from the love of the Lord and the love of our neighbor. The laws of the Church, the laws of heaven also. That which will constitute a Christian, will constitute an angel. Angels, the spirits of just men made perfect. The performance of use a means of happiness. Inquiry, where is this happiness to be enjoyed? answered. The nature of the place will depend on the quality of the state. Not at a distance from man but near to him. Arguments and illustrations in proof of these conclusions. There are degrees of perfection, and therefore degrees of happiness. Scriptural evidence on this point. What rest from

labor is; and what the works which follow us. Differences of state arise from the differences with which the Divine principles are received. The celestial and the spiritual, different characters of heavenly life. The Divine government of the one is as that of a father; and that of the other, as that of a king. Scriptural intimations respecting this. Employment requisite to happiness. The inhabitants of heaven must be occupied. Different constitutions of mind must, to be happy, have suitable engagements. Scriptural and rational illustrations of this conclusion. How the promise of rewards is to be understood. An argument for the diversities of pursuits in heaven afforded by the apostle's statement respecting the diversity of gifts in the Church. General summary as to how heaven should be thought of. Variety of employments, all of which will depend on the state of man's love for use. Some of the general engagements of the angels adverted to. Worship of the Lord included in all the employments of use. Intimations of some particular forms which such worship should assume. The kingdom of heaven, a kingdom of uses, in which every one performs some duty according to his peculiar qualification. Heaven not an empty world. Things there are all in correspondence with the states of its inhabitants. Those things created according as angels desire them, because an angel's desire is God's desire in him. Summary respecting Heaven. Hell formed by the interior lust of evil. The miseries of that world. The fire, brimstone, weeping, darkness, and gnashing of teeth. Conclusion.

ONE of the designs of the Bible, with all the peculiarities of its composition, is to assure man that he lives after death; that there is a heaven, as a state of felicity for the good and faithful; and a hell, as a state of wretchedness for the wicked and the faithless. Concerning these two states, it is important that men should possess some clear and satisfactory ideas. These are, doubtless, furnished by the Scriptures: our duty is to search for them; it is promised that they who seek shall find.

The terms *heaven* and *hell* are sometimes employed in the Scriptures, in an apparently natural sense, that is, that heaven denotes the air and the starry firmament around us; and that hell is the grave. (Gen. i. 17; Psalm cxv. 15, cxxiv. 8, cxxxiv. 3.) On this meaning of the latter term, sufficient has been said in the preceding chapter; and on the signification of the former, it will be enough to say, that it cannot be the heaven in which the Christian hopes to live, when he shall have passed from hence. It is true that the air,

“ And all the blue ethereal sky,”

are a natural heaven which contributes vastly to our present happiness. They are the means of health and life, and numerous other natural enjoyments; and the Scriptures beautifully remind us that they were created by the Lord. (Psalm viii. 3, 4.) An enlightened contemplation of their uses and magnificence, is eminently calculated to impress the mind with exalted ideas of God; also with humble sentiments of itself; and so, in some respects, to further its spiritual interests. Still this natural

heaven, to our bodies, is but an emblem of that spiritual heaven intended for our souls ; and this is equally the result of God's creation. Numerous passages might be cited, in which the terms heaven and hell plainly mean states of future existence for the good and the evil. Of this, every careful reader of the Scriptures is aware. The human mind has always been impressed with some notions upon these subjects. They have indeed, become crude, in proportion as men have been removed from the direct light of Revelation ; still, the universality of these impressions — the dread of annihilation — the hope of immortality — show that they are interwoven with the common perceptions of humanity. The false notions which may have been entertained upon those subjects, is no argument against this fact. The existence of a ruin is a pretty strong proof that there once existed a more perfect structure.

It is well known that the ancient Greeks held some opinions on these points :— hence, their *Elysian fields*, in which they considered the souls of the virtuous were to dwell after death ; and also their *Tartaros*, in which they supposed the most impious and guilty among mankind were to be punished. (See those articles in Lempriere's *Classical Dictionary*.) Those opinions prevailed long anterior to the birth of Christianity ; they were extant among a people, who certainly did not derive them from the Hebrew Scriptures. Where then, were they obtained ? Reason could not have invented them, because they lay beyond its sphere of natural action ; it could recognize and confirm the truth of them when once made known ; but the original discovery must have come from another source. Revelation from God, is the origin of all man's knowledge of spiritual things ; and there cannot be any well-founded doubt that the opinions adverted to, were derived from a tradition founded on that Revelation which had been given to the Noetic people. The Lord said unto Noah, " behold, I establish My covenant with you, and with your seed after you." (Gen. ix. 9.) This promise includes, among other things, the gift of a Revelation, without which no other ideas which a covenant may imply, could have been realized. Nothing is more certain than that the ancient Gentiles, of every nation, had a theology which was not derived from our Scriptures : the same may be said of many great nations now extant. It is true, so far as history is our informant, that each possessed some features which were not common to the rest ; yet all were built upon these substrata — that man lives after death, — that he is immortal, — that hereafter the virtuous will be happy, and the vicious miserable. These things, like the being of a God, were never entirely dissociated from the human mind. They have never been without a witness there ; they

must have come, originally, from God ; and because they are in agreement with the spiritual yearnings of humanity, man has always retained some knowledge respecting them. Hence it is not to be supposed, because the ancient Gentiles had their Elysium and Tartaros, which, in a few respects, may seem to resemble some crude notions of the heaven and hell mentioned in the Scriptures, that those ideas were of human origin. That which was gross and earthly about those notions was, indeed, of man's invention ; still it must be admitted, that they rested on a substratum of spiritual truth which an ancient revelation had disclosed : a truth, however, which had been so deeply overlaid with the corruptions of ages, that no merely human sagacity could effect its restoration. For all the purposes of genuine religion, it was actually lost. Elysium was regarded as a place in the earth, and Tartaros, as some locality in the sky.* Nor were the notions of the Jews respecting heaven and hell much more correct, notwithstanding they possessed, in the writings of Moses and the prophets, the means for superior knowledge respecting them. They considered heaven as some earthly glory, and hell as the region of the dead. Amidst all this ruin of spiritual thought on these subjects, Christianity arose. The Gospel not only brought life and immortality to light, but pointed out, with great clearness, the nature of heaven and hell, in which the souls of the wise, and the vicious are to live forever.

That the early Christians, especially the apostles, had some enlightened views respecting the final residences of the deceased, will be readily admitted. The Lord told them that they should see heaven open ; and that hell was a fire never to be quenched.† These, indeed, may be figurative statements, yet they are the figures of some precise ideas which the Lord intended that men should have respecting those states ; and we cannot doubt that the apostles had them. Their energies and hopes ; their characters, their lives, and deaths, were all attended with some stimulating and satisfactory impressions respecting man's condition beyond the grave. Their conduct cannot be accounted for upon any other principle. These ideas were bequeathed by them to their immediate successors, and therefore must have prevailed in the Primitive Church ; but the Church, in the process of time, lost both its simplicity and intelligence ; and Christianity, as it is understood at this day, has long ceased to teach any thing defi-

* I have recently seen a work, by a clergyman of the Established Church, in which it is seriously attempted to be shown that the situation of hell is in the sun !

† John i. 51 ; Mark ix. 43. "Hell fire," is not material fire, but wicked lusts, which having become the very life of wicked spirits, remain with them forever.

nite upon these subjects. Their names are employed, but no authoritative doctrinal explanation of the things which they express, is given.* Men seem to have thought that as definiteness arises in the mind, spirituality must depart from it; and consequently, that to retain spirituality of character, all our notions of heaven and hell must be either unsettled or mysterious. They have been so long accustomed to the unfavorable influences of a vague and indefinite theology, that they are startled when precision ventures to draw, as it were, the map of these spiritual kingdoms, and mark out their details for the information of the Church. To speak plainly respecting them is to be a visionary; to speak mysteriously is to be intelligent! It is however no new thing for the Church to put bitter for sweet. Sour grapes will set the teeth on edge. And therefore, it is no easy matter, in these times, to speak of the spiritual world in an acceptable way. Nevertheless, the Scriptures contain information and philosophy, which encourage us to make the attempt. We shall do this, chiefly in respect to heaven: the contrary of all that belongs to that kingdom is hell, because the dispositions of the inhabitants of these two worlds are completely opposite.

The Scriptures, as just observed, plainly tell us that there is a heaven for the good, and a hell for the wicked. This is admitted upon all hands. It is then, not the *fact* of their existence, which is to engage our attention, but the *nature* of those opposite kingdoms; and consequently, what we ought to believe respecting them.

Concerning heaven, some have asked, "who knows any thing about it—who has been there and revisited the earth with the requisite information?" And these questions have been urged, not merely by the sceptic, but by some Christians, who think that the sentiment of sublimity concerning it would pass away, if the notion of its mysteriousness were to be withdrawn. We are not of this opinion. Our ideas may be dim, but they need not be uncertain, they may be very general, and yet they need not be without details, on which the mind can dwell with enlightened satisfaction. Sights into that happy world have been granted to the prophets and others. Jesus Christ said of Him-

* Dr. Pearson indeed, in his *Exposition of the Creed*, Art., "He ascended into heaven," considered heaven to have some local situation beyond the stars. He says, "when we say Christ ascended, we understand a literal and local ascent," and "when we say the place into which he ascended was heaven,"—"we believe the body and soul of Christ to have passed far above all those celestial bodies which we see; and look upon that opinion as a low conceit, which left His body in the sun." This latter remark refers to the notions held upon the subject by the Seleuciani and Hermiani. Thus the local heaven of Jesus, contemplated by this learned prelate, was far beyond the sun or stars, these being "the celestial bodies which we see."

self, "I came down from heaven," and one of the objects for which He came, was to tell us of heavenly things. (John vi. 38.) The question therefore is this; namely, what information do His Scriptures contain respecting that kingdom.

It is easy to see, from the general teachings of the Word, that the heaven of which it treats as the final residence of the good, is a condition of spiritual felicity, formed and grounded in the human mind and heart, by their reception of the principles of wisdom and love from the Lord. All wisdom and love are the Lord's, and He dwells in man, and makes him happy, so far as he receives those principles: He also dwells with angels, and makes them happy, so far as they retain them. But reception in these cases requires communication. Whosoever receives any good thing from the Lord, is required to employ it for the benefit of others. "Freely ye have received; freely give." (Matt. x. 8.) It is *use* which promotes benefits and multiplies blessings. There are the satisfactions of *distributing*, as well as the felicity of *reception*; and these must be paramount in heaven, because it is a kingdom of love. "God is love;" men must love Him to go there; angels must love Him to remain there. There, every inhabitant will communicate his happiness to all, and all will assist in the promotion of it with each; there, love is mutual, and the uses of it are reciprocal: any one there can love another better than himself; self is forgotten in the delight which is experienced in promoting the happiness of others; so that heaven, when thought of as to its general state, is a term which expresses a condition of spiritual intelligence and joy, which exists in the soul from love to the Lord, and love to the neighbor. That which is a law of the Church, is also a law of heaven. The law which will establish happiness in the soul below, will also perpetuate it in the soul above. Whatsoever the Lord has taught us to do, in order that we may rise to heaven, must even there be continued to be done, in order to preserve our existence there. They who ascend into the Divine kingdom by obedience to God's laws, could not remain there, if they did not continue to obey. Now if there is any truth in these sentiments, and surely this cannot be doubted, then it will follow, that a right comprehension of those diversified duties, which the Scriptures teach us to observe as a means of promoting our happiness in this life, will be attended with some satisfactory ideas as to the means, by which our happiness is to be maintained in the life to come. That which constitutes a true Christian, will also constitute a true angel; and as Christianity is a principle of love, the acts and objects of which are guided by the light of spiritual intelligence, it is evident that the angelic character is of a similar nature. The acts of intel-

ligence and love, which cause joy to arise in the soul of a Christian, are acts of uses; these can never be dispensed with; to do so, would be to obliterate a means of joy, and therefore, an angel's happiness must depend upon the uses he can perform. We have no other idea of an angel than that of the spirit of a just man made perfect.* The notions that angels were created such; that they existed prior to mankind, and were made a superior race, are rather the intimations of poetry than the teachings of Revelation. The Scriptures frequently and forcibly, show the existence of angels, but it is nowhere said that such was their state by original creation; nor is any thing written respecting them, which is not consistent with the idea that they are the spirits of just men made perfect; enjoying the immortality proper to their natures, and performing the uses for which they had qualified themselves during their lifetime in the world. It is evident then, that heaven is a state of spiritual blessedness, which arises from the love of doing good, for that is the angelic use.

But it will be asked, Where is heaven? The Lord replied to this inquiry, when He said, "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."† This

* Heb. xii. 23. Man was created in the image and likeness of God. Considered in his primeval state of holiness and wisdom, he was the highest object of the Divine creation. What object of creation can be higher than that which is an image and likeness of the Highest? The Scriptures represent angels to be glorified men; and they frequently speak of them as men. The three angels who appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, are called *men*, Gen. xviii. 2, xix. 5; and the angel with whom Jacob wrestled is called a *man*, xxxii. 24. The angel who appeared to the wife of Manoah is called the *man of God*, Judges xiii. 6, 10, 11. The angel Gabriel, sent to Daniel, is called the *man Gabriel*, Dan. ix. 21. The angels who were seen by the woman at the Lord's sepulchre, are said to be *two men*, Luke xxiv. 4. The angel whom John was about to worship said, "see thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren, the prophets," Rev. xxii. 9. And the measure of the wall of the holy city, is said to have been "the measure of a man, that is of the angel," Rev. xxi. 17. It has been said, to avoid the force of these facts, that angels only assume the forms of men, to be seen as such: but where in the Scriptures is there any thing said respecting such assumptions? *Saints* are thought to be the proper designation of men in heaven, and not angels. But the Scriptures do not teach us this. *Saints* are holy persons, and these of course, exist in heaven, but they must, as such, have previously existed in the world. Aaron is called the saint of the Lord, Psalm cvi. 16, and again it is written "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," cxvi. 15. *Saint* is most properly the designation of a holy man on earth; but *angel* is the name of a holy man in heaven.

† Luke xvii. 20, 21. It may be asked, whether what, in this passage, is called "the kingdom of God," is the same as that which in other passages, is called "the kingdom of heaven?" We at once admit that a difference of idea is intended to be expressed by these two phrases, but then it is only

plainly represents that kingdom as a *state*, consequent upon the voluntary admission of the Divine government into the human soul. Still it may be asked, where is this state to be enjoyed? We answer, wherever that state is possessed. They who have it during their lifetime in the world, experience what is popularly expressed by the phrase, "heaven upon earth;" and when they die, the soul, which cannot die, still retains it, though in a higher state of being, and in a purer way. Heaven is commonly regarded as a *place* of happiness, rather than a *state* of it—some magnificent locality where every thing is provided to promote the blessedness of its inhabitants. But this is a material view of the subject. The place of heaven, and the nature of its magnificence, will depend entirely upon the spiritual states of those who have received its principles. The happiness of the human mind does not depend upon its dwelling-place, but upon the purity of its spiritual state. If all that elegance could suggest, or wisdom could create, were brought together in some locality, and men were introduced to them, without regard to their internal qualifications for enjoying them, they would not insure their happiness; for happiness is a state of mind independent of place. Misery is felt in palaces, when their inhabitants are wicked. Wicked men have no delight in the society of the good; they feel themselves restrained by it; they are anxious to break away from it; and no *place*, however beautiful and brilliant, could make them happy in such society; the reason is given by the Lord,— "they loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John iii. 19.)

The kingdom of heaven being an interior state of spiritual goodness, plainly shows that it is not separated from man by any distance of space. The idea that it is ever in proximity with the human race, is indicated in the Scriptures: Jesus said, "the kingdom of Heaven is at hand:" (Matt. x. 7; Mark i. 15;) "the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you;" (Luke x. 9;) and surely the angels who are given charge over us, and who minister unto us as heirs of salvation, do not quit their heavenly habitations to perform these duties. (Psalm xci. 11; Heb. i. 14.) Moreover, the Lord said, "if a man love Me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) By the Lord making his abode with the man who loves him, is plainly meant the presence of heaven, because heaven cannot be absent from that love which experiences the Divine presence. Hence it is plain, that heaven is a state of spiritual light and loveliness;

a distinction with respect to that which is to constitute the happiness of that kingdom; "the kingdom of God" denoting the felicity which arises from the reception of God's wisdom; and "the kingdom of heaven," denoting the enjoyments which attend the reception of God's love. Thus both phrases refer to that world, but each expresses a distinction respecting it.

and that the place of it is not in any distant locality from men, but that it is every where, and with every one, in whom this state exists.

But here it may be asked, how the interior delight of spiritual goodness and truth, are to be enjoyed when the body dies? To answer this question intelligibly, it is necessary to remember that it is the *soul* which constitutes the man: it is this which thinks, and feels, and cares, and acts. This is a spiritual substance, distinguished by human individuality and form, and it is entirely distinct, both in nature and in quality, from the physical structure. They who do not so think of the soul, can have no idea of it, as a definite existence, after bodily death. The physical structure is merely the organism by which it acts in the natural world, and by which it announces its existence there; but it is by no means requisite for its manifestation in the spiritual world. (See chapter iii of this work.) *Place* in the other life, does not induce *state*; but it is state, which induces the appearances of place. Even in this world, certain states of mind will sometimes produce the appearances of place, different from that in which we are physically located. Under such circumstances, we sometimes cease to see the objects which immediately surround us, and behold only those which our states originate; and those objects are not *without*, but *within* us. So, neither is heaven or hell out of men, but they are states of vice and virtue, with their consequent misery and happiness *within* them. But other experience will serve to illustrate this idea.

Sleep and its attendant phenomena, plainly show that the engagements of the body are not necessary to the activities of the soul. In this state, the senses are not affected by external objects — they are insensible to all ordinary impressions from without; and yet the soul appears to be fully awake to a variety of sensations both of affection and thought. We look upon the body of a person in a state of sleep, but it evinces no activity of mind — no powers of spiritual action — no sensibility of place; and yet, at the same time, how full is the soul of engagements and pursuits! How distinctly is it occupied with all the sensations of state, and all the appearances of place! Surely these facts may serve, illustratively, to answer the question, where does the soul experience its sensation of state and perception of place, when separated from the body? Who, under such circumstances, has not experienced delights and miseries; fears and hopes; temptations and triumphs; the intercourse of friends and the repulse of enemies; the enjoyments of home and travels abroad; — in short, who has not experienced all the phenomena of diversified action on the part of the soul, when the body has been at rest? Do we not appear to see, and hear, and talk, and act, with as much certainty during the sleep of the body as when it is awake? All the realities of life are known and felt,

under such circumstances, and this shows that thought, sensation, and action, can be full and vigorous, without the locomotion, or the ordinary use of the physical organism. A dream is felt to be either a pleasing or painful reality for the time it lasts; and we have only to consider the states experienced therein, to be perpetuated, in order to possess a forcible illustration of the nearness of the spiritual world, and of the appearances which therein prevail. The terror which is sometimes experienced in a dream is so great, as to awake us from our sleep, and we feel glad to be delivered from the pain which we were suffering. If this state of the soul were to be perpetuated, would it not be a frightful punishment? Something analogous to this is the state and place of hell. The delights which are sometimes experienced, and the uses which are performed from an interior state of goodness, in a state of sleep, also serve to furnish us with some faint idea of heaven. It serves as an illustration, to show how it is "within," — what it is when "opened," and thus that it is near, with all its realities and pleasures. The distinction between the illustration and the reality is, that in the one case, the body is inactive through sleep; and in the other case, it is inactive through death. Some may say that this distinction is so great as to invalidate the force of the illustration; we do not think so. The analogy instituted is not between sleep and death, but between the condition of the soul during these two states of bodily inactivity; moreover, the propriety of the illustration is shown by the Scriptures. Jacob "dreamed, and behold a ladder stood upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it; and behold the Lord stood above it;" and when he awoke, he was made to say, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not," — "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13, 16, 17. See chap. viii. of this work, where the subjects of visions and dreams are considered more at large.)

From these indications respecting the general state of heaven, and the appearances of place which arise therefrom, we may now proceed to consider some particulars respecting the government of that kingdom, together with a few of the distinctions and pursuits, which the Scriptures show us to prevail therein.

The Divine laws, though various, are not dissimilar. Variety constitutes beauty, and contributes to perfection. The sum of all the Divine enactments respects two points; *first*, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," "and the *second* is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. xxii. 37, 39.) Now the observance of these two general laws involves the performance of particular duties, degrees of perfection, and gradations of delight.

All persons do not procure the same extent of wisdom. There are varieties in the strength of faith, and diversities in the excellency of virtue; and although the Lord has mercifully marked out for our attainment the standard of perfection, yet he has given us to understand that there is a happiness for those who are in the inferior, as well as for those who are in the superior degrees of ruling good. Every one may know that there are degrees of excellence in our love to God, and varieties of perfection in our charities to man; and as heaven is governed by the wisest laws, it will follow that arrangements are made by them, for the affectionate reception and happy disposal of all in whom such degrees become the ruling principle of their life. The Lord revealed this fact when he said, "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you." (John xiv. 2.) The Apostle also referred to it when he declared, "one star differeth from another star in glory." (1 Cor. xv. 41.) Again, he said, I knew a man who was "caught up to the *third heaven*;" which evidently implies that there were other two of an inferior character: he also says that he knew a man "how that he was caught up into *paradise*, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter;" (2 Cor. xii. 2-4;) where it is plain that paradise is some spiritual state, different from the heavens of which he had just spoken, and which, agreeably to what has been shown in the preceding chapter, is that department in the world of spirits, in which the souls of the righteous are assembled before the time of judgment. It was with the view of conveying this idea to the world, that Jesus Christ compared His kingdom to so many pursuits which are wise and innocent on earth. Thus He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man which sowed good seed in his field;" it "is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened;" it "is like unto treasure hid in a field;" it "is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls;" with many others. (Matt. xiii. 31, 32, 44, 45.) Certainly, that cannot be the same uniform enjoyment which is admissive of such a variety of similitudes. The mercy of the Lord is unbounded, and the administration of His laws is such as to admit every one into some degree of enjoyment, who has prepared himself for it. Entrance into heaven is not given in an arbitrary manner, but through a spiritual preparation and fitness. It is said, that they who die in the Lord, and thus enter into heaven, shall "rest from their labors;" and yet that "their works do follow them;" (Rev. xiv. 13;) which plainly shows that there must be variety in the heavenly employments. From the promise that such are to rest from their labors, it has been vulgarly supposed that heaven is a place, in which there is comparatively nothing to be done; so that in the minds of the

populace, heaven is interpreted to mean little else than a comfortable sinecure. But on this mistake we need not dwell. Eternal rest in that kingdom cannot mean everlasting inactivity or indolence. We may be certain that its inhabitants do not constitute an idle population: their works have followed them, — works of mind, for there are works of mind as well as body — and therefore, they must be engaged in the furtherance of those duties of innocence and love which constituted their interior delight, while they remained below.* By resting from labors, in *heaven*, is meant the cessation from difficulties and trial: men will there have nothing to oppose the free current of their holy love: but that love must itself be active because it is a living thing; and that activity is what is called the works which are to follow us. The uses which are there performed are said to be a rest from labor, because they will all proceed from love. They who love their duty, do not feel the observance of it to be laborious; they find delight and happiness in its just performance.

It is evident that those works are not the employments of the body, or the occupations of the world; they are the works of the mind, and consist in the activities of its love for the promotion of something that is spiritually good and useful to the society among whom they live. The Lord looks upon the motives by which men are actuated in what they do; and He raises into heaven those who have been influenced by charity and faith, and separates them from those who have been principled in the degradations of sinfulness and fraud. It is the motives and intentions of men which are the works that follow them into the eternal world; the ends which they have proposed to themselves in all that they have done — these are called *works*, because they are in the continual effort to accomplish their purposes; and they are said to *follow* us, because they are incorporated into our spiritual nature. To take them away would be to annihilate that, in which we have our consciousness of living. All the principles of the human mind are active towards some end; and in that end, they have their character for *good* or for *evil*.

* Dr. Channing, writing on this subject, says, "the true view of heaven which the Scriptures give, that which reason sanctions, and that which we can most powerfully realize is, that it will not essentially change, but rather improve our nature. We shall be the same beings as on earth; we shall retain our present faculties, our present affections, our love of knowledge, love of beauty, love of action, love of approbation, our sympathy, gratitude, and pleasure in success." — *Memoirs*, Vol. II. p. 22. Dr. Watts also, treating of the same subject, asks, "Is there not a Boyle and a Ray in heaven, pious souls who were trained up in a sanctified philosophy?" — "may we not suppose these spirits have some special circumstances of sacred pleasure, suited to their labors and studies in their state of trial on earth?" "May not artificers, and traders, and pious women, be fitted by their characters and conduct on earth for peculiar stations and employments in heaven?" — *Works*, Vol. ii. p.p. 388-9.

Although the works which follow us to heaven must all have respect to charity and faith; yet there is an indefinite variety in man's reception of those principles, arising from that diversity of genius, which so plainly distinguishes the human mind. Every one has his own particular mode of thinking, state of affection, individuality of character, and sources of enjoyment. These features of the human soul, are, to some extent, visible even in this world: and surely there cannot be any reasonable doubt that the good take with them so much of these peculiarities as is wise and innocent. The many mansions in the heavenly house, must have been provided in consequence of the different states of those who are intended to inhabit them. This difference of state arises from the difference with which the Divine principles of love and wisdom are received. Some persons are more under the influence of good affections in their will; these make the reception of love a ruling delight; and yet there are those among this class who receive that principle more interiorly than others. But there are other persons who are more under the influence of wisdom in their understandings; these make the reception of truth their ruling delight; and yet there are among this class, those who cherish that principle more interiorly than others. The former state may be expressed by the term *celestial*, and the latter by the term *spiritual*; and thus heaven may be considered as being arranged into two general states, each requiring some particular government. Every one may see that such marked differences in character, require some differences in government. Doubtless, they who are in the love of genuine *goodness*, are regulated by a more interior law than they who are in the love of genuine *truth*; because goodness is superior to truth. To do good, because truth teaches that it ought to be done, is to be in the good of obedience; but to do good *because* it is good, and purely for its own sake, is a higher state. Hence, they who are in the former condition, regard the Lord as a King, who has vouchsafed to govern; while they who are in the latter condition, look up to Him as a Father, who has designed to save. The Lord's government of the latter, proceeds from His character as a Father and a Savior; but His government of the former, arises from His dignity as a Prince and a King. It is in consequence of the different states of men, under which the Lord is regarded, that He is, in the Scriptures, spoken of by such a variety of names — every name indicating some distinctive idea under which He is perceived by man.

These two general distinctions in the heavenly world, are pointed at in the two great laws of Christian life before alluded to. Love to the Lord above all things, is said to be the first commandment, because it is the chief. They who are principled in it are in the most interior reception of the Divine goodness:

hence, they are interiorly conjoined to the Lord ; and consequently, they must excel, both in glory and wisdom, those who are not so intimately united with Him. They are said to be "taught of God ;" (1 Thess. iv. 9 ;) and the Lord said of them, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Jer. xxxi. 33.)

But to love our neighbor as ourselves is said to be the second, — still like unto the first, — because it is a less interior reception of the Divine principles. The reception of the first — the great commandment — influences the will to love what is good for the sake of *goodness* ; but the reception of the second, influences the will to love what is good for the sake of *truth* ; and thus, the former are in that celestial state which is called "the Mountain of Jehovah," while the latter are in that spiritual state which is called the "place of His Holiness." These two conditions are frequently treated of in the Scriptures. Sometimes the inferior state is simply spoken of as "Heaven," and the superior is designated as the "Heaven of Heavens." (1 Kings viii. 27.) Heaven is said to be the Lord's "Throne," (Isaiah lxvi. 1,) when the government of His spiritual kingdom is treated of ; because that is considered, by its inhabitants, as His royal habitation ; but it is called His "dwelling-place," (1 Kings viii. 30,) when the government of His celestial kingdom is treated of ; because that is considered, by its inhabitants, as His sacerdotal residence. It is written, "he that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward ; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward." (Matt. x. 41.) In this passage, the promise of a difference of reward is stated with the utmost plainness. To receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, denotes to receive the teachings of truth, in their quality of truth, as coming from the Lord ; for He is the grand prophet ; and to receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, denotes to receive the influences of goodness, in their quality of goodness, as coming from the Lord, for He alone is righteous. Each state is to have its own reward, the one being an admission into the Lord's spiritual kingdom, and the other an admission into His celestial kingdom.*

* "It was a beautiful and animating theory of the philosopher, and one which, however visionary it may be reckoned, it were well if acted on as if true, namely, that there are gradations of happiness in futurity, to which the souls of men will be raised, according to the state of moral and intellectual excellence they have attained in the body ; meaning thereby that those who have made the greatest progress in self-improvement on earth, will experience — as they are capable of appreciating — a more refined and exalted species of bliss hereafter, than others who have neglected the same opportunities." — *Story of Henry Black, Chambers's Pocket Miscellany*, Vol. viii.

But although heaven appears to be arranged into these two general kingdoms, in consequence of the distinction of state which exists between those who have the most delight in doing good, and those who experience the most satisfaction in knowing truth, yet they constitute a one; like the two faculties of will and understanding, which together make but one mind; or like the two properties of flame and light, which give forth but one glory.

Every mind is distinguished by some mental characteristic which is peculiarly its own, and therefore it must have some specific exercises to maintain its satisfactions. And it is always to be remembered, that the human mind is still a human mind, though it may exist in heaven. It seems to be one of the plainest arrangements of the Divine Providence, that employment should be necessary to happiness. The idle become vicious and depraved. The population of heaven is the very opposite of this, and therefore, they must be industriously occupied in the performance of those duties which are in conformity with their loves. Love, being our active principle, must have engagements: they are contributory to man's happiness. Those engagements cannot be monotonous. There must be variety in the heavenly pursuits. Sameness would pall upon the senses and lose its efficacy to please, unless relieved by something else. Creation is not of one form, or of one color. Men's minds are differently constituted; every one has something by which he is identified from the rest, and by which he is also fitted for the performance of some peculiar use; it is therefore eminently unreasonable to suppose, that there is only one employment for all those who become inhabitants of the kingdom of the blessed.* When the Lord pronounced the beatitudes, He taught a different lesson. He said, "Blessed are the poor in *spirit*; for theirs is the kingdom of *heaven*. Blessed are they that *mourn*; for they shall be *comforted*. Blessed are the *meek*; for they shall inherit the *earth*. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after *righteousness*; for they shall be *filled*. Blessed are the *merciful*; for they shall *obtain* mercy. Blessed are the pure in *heart*; for they shall see *God*. Blessed are the *peacemakers*; for they shall be called the *children* of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for *righteousness*' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of *heaven*. Blessed are ye, when men shall persecute you, and say

* Dr. Watts, in his *Essay on the Happiness of Departed Spirits*, says, "Let the worship of glorious spirits be never so various, yet I cannot persuade myself, that mere direct acts or exercises of what we properly call worship, are their *only* and everlasting *work*." Worship of the Lord is one of the duties by which they are, as it were, reanimated to perform other duties. Every duty, however, which is in conformity with the Divine will, is, in a certain sense, an act of worship.

all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." (Matt. v. 2-12.) We need not stop to inquire into the nature of these several blessings, nor to enter upon the particular qualifications requisite for their enjoyment; it is enough for the argument in hand to observe, respecting them, that the Lord has announced a catalogue of distinct virtues, to each of which he has prefixed the statement of a blessing — a blessing in heaven in all cases, though it is only expressly stated of some — and those blessings must be different in all cases, because the virtues which conduce to them are various. The *great reward in heaven*, which is promised to those who are principled in one virtue, and the simple statement that *theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, who are distinguished by other virtues, plainly show that there are rewards of greater and less import. This fact is conformable to experience. They who, from love, perform the higher duties of religion, must needs experience more exalted sensations of happiness, than they who only attend to its humbler teachings. Heaven is open to receive them both; but as their states are different, so also must be the quality of their happiness. And further, as their capabilities for use are different, so also, must be their employments. Surely, some uses will be required from the philosopher, different from those which are to be demanded from the peasant. They who have cultivated an enlarged acquaintance with the Divine Word, must thereby be qualified for the performance of higher uses than those whose knowledge is less extensive. Jesus has distinctly said, "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required," (Luke xii. 48,) and this law is as applicable to man in heaven, as on earth.

The Lord said of John the Baptist, "he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he;" (Matt. x. 11;) in which passage, the idea of greater and less conditions, in that kingdom, is declared with the utmost plainness. It is also intimated in the Lord's reply to the mother of Zebedee's children, who desired for her two sons that one should sit on the right hand, and the other on the left, in His kingdom; namely, "it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." (Matt. xx. 20, 23.) Indeed, every one may see that the right and left hands, spoken of in reference to the Divine habitations, are terms intended to express some distinctive conditions which exist therein. Such is the equity of the Divine character, that every state of interior good with man, is made to be admixt of its distinctive blessing. Jesus said, "whosoever shall give to drink, unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matt. x. 42.) By reward here, and in other cases, is not to be understood recompense for merit: men of themselves have

nothing meritorious ; when they shall have done all those things which are commanded them, they are unprofitable servants, having done that which it was their duty to do. (Luke xviii. 10.) All merit belongs to the Lord, and to the Divine things which proceed from Him ; and by reward is meant, the implantation in man of goodness and truth from the Lord, so far as man loves them for the sake of use ; in this case, the implantation of those excellences is an orderly consequence of the loves, and not an arbitrary recompense ; because man cannot do good until he has received the good wherewith to do it ; and the delight which attends that reception, when received for the sake of use, becomes the reward — it is as a fruit from its blossom, or as a river from its fountain, and that delight is perpetuated in the other life, because it is a Divine principle implanted in the soul of man.

There can be no doubt, that the Church on earth is designed to be to us, in some respects, a resemblance of the Church in heaven. The Lord's will is to be done in both. There are various laws to be obeyed, and therefore, there must be a diversity of affections from which to obey them. The Apostle, treating of the Church below, speaks of it as one body with many members, among which there is no ground for complaint, because each is requisite to the existence of the complete body. Thus he says, "if the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand ; is it, therefore, not of the body ?" — "If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing ? and if the whole were hearing, where were the smelling ?" — "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee ; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you : " and these facts are adduced by him to illustrate his declaration, that "there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And there are differences of administration, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." "For to one is given the word of wisdom ; to another the word of knowledge ; to another faith ; to another the gift of healing ; to another the working of miracles ; to another prophecy ; to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; to another the interpretation of tongues : but all these worketh that selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." (1 Cor. xii.) Now, as there are these various characters in the Church, and as they all originate out of the same Divine Spirit, they must be good, and therefore, the good which is the end of them, must be perpetuated in the Church in heaven. The particular gifts of the Spirit, which a man is enabled to cultivate below, are surely not annihilated when he may be permitted to rise above. The end in every case, so far as it is an orderly use, must be retained : it has been implanted in the man during his lifetime in

the world, because he has loved it, and it will be retained in heaven for the same reason. The specific love of an Angel is his peculiar life. The love of God cannot perish; the love of our neighbor cannot perish; so neither can the love of any of the diversified uses which these involve. Hence we learn that heaven is to be thought of as a magnificent kingdom, in which love and wisdom, goodness and truth, charity and faith, exist in multitudinous variety, according to the diversified states of human reception. The Divine principles which constitute heaven, with all its felicity, come forth from the Lord as one; all their variety originates in the difference of human reception; but this variety is perfectly harmonious. It is the reception of the Divine principles which makes men human; if, therefore, the Divine were to be withdrawn from them, nothing that is human would be left to them; and thus it is by the communication and reception of the Divine, by men in heaven, that heaven is felt by them and that humanity is blessed.

But as every one receives the Divine principles in a way conformable to the peculiarity of his genius, and the distinctiveness of his character, the inhabitants of heaven must be variously employed. The Divine principle in them cannot be inactive. All that the Lord communicates to men, or to angels, is designed by Him, not only to bless the recipient in reception, but also, through him to promote some use, and to make his blessing a means of use to others. God vouchsafes the wealth of His kingdom, not to be hoarded up in individual bosoms, but to be employed for the general good: and they who distribute what they receive must be usefully engaged. The precise nature of the employments of the angels must always depend upon the precise quality of the individual's reception of Divine things; and his joys will consist in the uses which they enable him to perform. Who does not see, that there cannot be any happiness, if there be no engagements? How miserable are they who have nothing to do! Inactivity enfeebles the mind, and it is fatal to all enjoyment. We are exhorted "to do good and to communicate;" (Heb. xiii. 16;) and this is as applicable to man's state in heaven as on earth. The occupations of the angels will, then, be such as to promote the pleasures and innocence of those by whom they are performed; and also, be suited to those purified affections of goodness, and enlightened studies of truth, which have been implanted in their characters during their lifetime in the world. The different degrees of perception which compose the spiritual characters of the heavenly inhabitants, require diversities of pursuits in order to perpetuate their happiness; and these pursuits must agree with those interior delights which they have cultivated in the world. If it were not so, and some other delights were implanted in their stead, man would lose his

individuality, and so cease to be that interior being, which had been formed during the period of his probation. Hence it seems evident, that every individual angel must have his specific employment, in performing those uses which arise out of his reception of those gifts and graces, which are communicated to him by the Lord. And the happiness of all will be complete: that is to say, their qualification for its enjoyment will be filled. This is what is meant by the Lord's statement—"give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again." (Luke vi. 38.) Every one has his "measure"—"the measure of a man, that is, of the angel"—(Rev. xxi. 17)—the measure of affection with which he has received the Divine graces. With some, this measure is greater than with others; but whatever be the extent of it, it will be filled to the brim. This measure is procured during lifetime in the world. The more intensely the good things of heaven have been loved, the greater must be the measure that is secured; still every one's qualification, whether it is small or great, will be filled with all the happiness it can possibly enjoy; and the degree of that qualification will go on perpetuating to eternity; what is beyond that degree is out of the angel, and whatsoever is out of him, is no part of him, nor does it come within his appreciation. Every one is in his own love, and he is fully delighted with the exercise of his own capabilities for use.

The particular employment of individual angels is not revealed. It is general principles upon this subject which are announced, and from these we may collect some information respecting certain classes of usefulness which engage the attention of angels. Reference to a few instances will sufficiently illustrate this point.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the worship of the Lord, and the study of His Word, will be among the most distinguished employments of the angelic world. The Word, we are told, is settled in heaven. (Psalm cxix. 89.) The design of its existence there, must be to furnish the angels with the means of enlarging their delights in wisdom. And the worship in that kingdom is stated in the Scriptures with equal plainness. (See Heb. i. 6; Rev. v. 14, xi. 16, xix. 1.) The worship of the Lord, however, does not there simply mean to pay to him Divine honors on particular or stated occasions, according to the common interpretation of the term. This idea may, indeed, be implied, but the term must signify a much larger conception. Every thing which is done by an angel, will arise out of his intense reverence for the Divine will, or law; and thus, all his acts, however apparently remote they may be from what we, in this

world, may call direct acts of worship, will nevertheless be worship, because they will all be founded on a love for, and a devotedness to, the Divine will. In this sense, all the inhabitants of heaven must ever be engaged in continual worship, because they cannot do any thing apart from a regard to God and His laws. Hence, all the employments of the angels may come under the general designation of the worship of the Lord. Still the Word gives us some information respecting the particular forms which this worship takes. It is written of the Lord, that "he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways:" (Psalm xci. 11 :) and again, "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) In these passages, we are plainly informed that the angels have some employment in administering, in some way, to the welfare of mankind. The different constitution of human minds in the world, obviously presents to the angels a different plane on which to operate. As every man is his own individuality, he becomes a special object on which some angelic being, distinguished by some appropriate grace and fitness, may confer some use. Thus, the humiliated condition of humanity on earth, presents occasion for the employment of glorified humanity in heaven. Repentance is one of the necessary duties of the Christian — repentance of the particular guilt into which he has fallen — repentance in which he feels a sense of the enormity of sin, and a determination to abandon it, as a sin against God. When this takes place in man, a state of good has been accomplished to which the charge and ministration of angels have contributed; hence the Lord has emphatically told us, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth:" — (Luke xv. 10 :) — this joy resulting from the success of their benevolent activities.

Again, Jesus said, "ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."* Here we are informed that one of the employments of the regenerate, in heaven, will be to judge the twelve tribes. But every one may see that this does not mean that they are to exercise the functions of a judge upon the descendants of Israel: that can form no portion of the angelic character; it belongs not to their privileges, nor does it constitute any portion of their employments. To judge the twelve tribes of Israel, as a people, could not confer any desirable advantage; they cannot always be in the process of being judged; and even if a blessing could be associated with such a function, it could have no per-

* Matt. xix. 28. For an enlarged exposition of this text, the reader is referred to a sermon by the author; in the collection of sermons called "Droppings from the Crystal Fountain," p. 171. Hodson, London.

manency, for when the work is finished, the delight which it had occasioned, will pass away. This is not a characteristic of the happiness of heaven ; none of its felicities can perish, because they all originate in God, and are perpetuated by Him ; and judgment belongeth to Him alone. The twelve tribes of Israël were a representative people. They signified all the goods and truths of the Word, and of the Church ; and the promise to those who follow the Lord, that they should sit on thrones judging these tribes, denotes that the regenerate would exist in tranquil dignity ; and be, by their condition, qualified to see and to discriminate justly and wisely, concerning those holy and heavenly things ; and who does not see that this must be one of the universal employments of the angelic life ?

Another enjoyment, and consequent employment of the regenerate in heaven, is pointed out by the Lord, where he says, "many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. viii. 11.) Here, *coming* implies exertion, prompted by a disposition towards some orderly end ; they who are influenced in that exertion by the good of love are said to come from the east ; while they who are animated in the same course by the good of faith are described as coming from the west. To sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, denotes the intimacy of such parties with the Divine things of *love, wisdom, and use*, of which things those patriarchs were the types : — an intimacy which is originally obtained, and afterwards preserved, by no other means than the orderly exertion of mind and body to promote what is good, according to the angel's distinctive ability and genius. Every one chooses the work which is best suited to his character. They who are qualified for the superior use, will select it ; they who are adapted for the inferior use will prefer it ; and the qualifications in all cases must regulate the choice ; there will be freedom in the choice, because it will be the result of love ; for all freedom is of love ; and there will be delight in it, because all delight resides in what is loved.

Upon another occasion the Lord said, "suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mark x. 14.) Now a large proportion of the human race pass into the heavenly world during the condition of infancy. But who does not see that they cannot at once enter upon the full enjoyment of those enlarged perceptions of truth, and elevated conceptions of duty, which constitute the angelic character ? The innocence and simplicity of their minds must require instruction in the things of wisdom ; and doubtless they will be so instructed. By whom, then, is this duty to be performed ? The Lord, unquestionably, is the prime mover in effecting it ; still he promotes the work through the medium of angelic beings, and

thus He at once finds for them a means of employment, and a source of happiness. They who are principled in wisdom, have engagements and delights in the communication of it ; and surely, it may be rationally affirmed that the wiser inhabitants in heaven will regard it as a portion of their duty to instruct the simple and less informed. And who can doubt that the performance of such a holy work will be attended with joy and gladness ? Doubtless, in heaven, it will be a "delightful task to teach the young idea how to shoot." Indeed, the Lord has intimated that there is a class of angelic beings in the heavenly world, who are peculiarly engaged in ministering to the necessities of the young, "Take heed" said He "that ye despise not one of these little ones ; for I say unto you, that in heaven *their* angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."* By the angels of the "little ones," are plainly meant those angels who attend their spirits ; and why do they attend ? Certainly not as idle lookers-on, or indifferent spectators of infantile necessities and wants. No ! their object must be to minister some use to their condition here ; and if the "little ones" should die, to receive them with care and love, to impress upon them what is wise and good, and thus to bring them into the intelligent enjoyment of an angel's life. It is indicated that the angels who perform this duty are of a peculiar class ; they always behold the face of our Heavenly Father ; that is, they are ever in the perception of the Divine goodness which contemplates the raising of humanity to heaven.

From these considerations, it seems plain that the kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of uses, in which every inhabitant sustains a dignity, and maintains a station, determined by that usefulness which he is best capable of performing among his righteous associates. One and all are diligently engaged in the enlargement of that knowledge, and the augmentation of those virtues which have been the means of conducting them thither. The delights which they experience in the performance of those uses, carries them majestically along, and secures to them a condition of eternal rest, because it is the end of their inmost love. "Love and wisdom without use, are not any thing, they are only ideal entities, nor do they become real until they are fixed in use ; for love, wisdom, and use, are three things which cannot be separated ; for if they are separated, each is reduced to nothing ; love is nothing without wisdom, but in wisdom it is formed for something, which something is use ; wherefore, when love by wisdom is in use, then it is something, yea it then really is ; they are

* Matt. xviii. 10. "Our Lord here not only alludes to, but in my opinion establishes the notion received by almost all nations, viz., that every person has a *guardian angel* ; and that these have always access to God, to receive orders relative to the management of their charge." — Dr. A. Clarke, *Commentary*.

exactly like end, cause, and effect ; the end is not any thing unless it exists by the cause in the effect ; and if any one of the three be destroyed, the whole is destroyed, and becomes as nothing." (*Apocalypse Revealed*, 875.) Therefore, when it is said that heaven is a kingdom of uses, the meaning is, that it is a kingdom in which the love and wisdom of the angels are continually fixing themselves in use, or what is the same thing, the good works of charity.

All must be in the delight of doing something that is good, and also engaged in the performance of it ; but no two can be influenced by a delight which is precisely of the same quality. Harmonious resemblances will indeed prevail, but sameness of character cannot exist. Myriads may be in the eye ; and myriads may be in the heart of that grand man to which heaven may be likened, but still every individual will, as it were, constitute some specific atom, of which the whole organism is composed. Variety is a mark of God's infinity in creation ; it is God who creates the heavens. Hence every holy inhabitant of that kingdom has to perform some distinct use in carrying out the magnificent scheme of human felicity — a use suited to his genius — a genius which will secure for him some distinct position in the heavenly world, and in which he will be best enabled to contribute something to the general felicity and well being of the whole. The worship of the Lord, the celebration of His glory, praise for His goodness, contemplations of His redemption, acknowledgments of His Providence, and the study of His Word, will constitute an interior delight, which will impart animation to every other duty, and ground the performance of it upon a love that is at once pure, permanent, and beautiful.

Nor is heaven to be considered only as a spiritual state with all the appearances of place, having an immense population contributing by the wisdom of their minds, and the holiness of their actions towards the happiness of each other. It is a world of first principles, in which originates the existence of all things that are good and lovely. It cannot be an empty world, but it must contain within it all such things as are adapted to promote the joy, and perpetuate the blessedness of its inhabitants. The magnificence of heaven arises out of the exalted condition of its inhabitants ; for it is a law of spiritual life that every state is surrounded with every thing that is in correspondence with itself. This law is, in some measure, exemplified even in this life, where there exists so many adventitious circumstances to prevent its action. Thus, orderly minds are always active in procuring for themselves corresponding homes, and all that they have there, is found to be in agreement with their tastes and means. It is a natural effort of the human mind to procure to itself whatsoever it loves. The angelic mind is a human mind

in a state of elegant refinement. If, then, any thing were present to an individual angel which was not in correspondence with his state, it is plain that it would affect him as a disorder, and thus disturb his felicity ; so also, if any thing were absent which an angel had desired, that absence would be felt as a drawback upon his happiness. The means possessed by the angels for acquiring the elegant existences which distinguish their heavenly homes, are that love of God, and wisdom in his truth, which regeneration has implanted in their natures. Their characters are entirely formed by these principles ; and therefore, they can wish for nothing but what is in agreement with them, nor can they want for any thing which may be requisite for the full enjoyment of their position. On this principle, every angelic wish must be instantly satisfied by the immediate creation of God ; because the desires of the angels are the activities of the Divine principles in them ; and therefore, all their desires are Divine desires in them ; and as in heaven there can be no obstacle to the production of the thing so desired, it must be immediately created. It is this which constitutes the glory of the Divine kingdom ; and a sense of which led the apostle to declare "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1Cor. ii. 9.)

From these considerations, we learn that heaven is constituted by the Divine principles of love and wisdom, variously received and cherished by the human soul, — that the place of heaven is every where, where a state arising from this reception exists, — that the employments of heaven consist in the performance of diversified uses, according to the particular qualifications of angelic characters, and that the objects which exist therein, result from the states of its inhabitants, they being created by God to promote their happiness.

Now as heaven is formed in man by an interior love of what is good, and as all the delights of that kingdom arise from the performance of those uses which that love is continually prompting ; so, hell is formed in man by an interior lust for what is evil, and all the miseries of that region arise from the perpetration of those atrocities which that lust is unceasingly urging. As heaven is a kingdom of virtue and wisdom ; so hell is a region of malignity and artifice. The foundation of this frightful condition is the love of self and the love of the world ; for in proportion as these are cherished, the love of God and the love of the neighbor are shut out ; and with them all that is human is put away. The interiors of persons in whom this has taken place, are necessarily monstrous, and therefore they are called devils and satans ; — devils, to indicate the evil nature of their wills ; and satans to express the perverse character of their thoughts. The souls of such, in hell, are described as "worms," because they have removed themselves so far away from human principles. (Isaiah lxvi. 24 ; Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.) As all in heaven are forms of loveliness and beauty, so all in hell are the shapes of deformity and wickedness. Sin must needs present itself in a grim and hideous aspect ; and all the objects by which such parties will surround themselves, will be in horrid conformity with their detested states. But as there are varieties of excellence in heaven, so there are different degrees of wickedness in hell. All sin in which a man may be principled, will necessarily remove him from God ; still, some sins being of greater enormity than others, they will remove him

farther off, and thus into a deeper hell. Punishment will be proportionate to the guilt; it will arise out of the state of the wicked, in which every one is seeking the gratification of some lust by the perpetration of some atrocity. "God doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men," and that which he does not willingly, he does not at all. His mercy and pity are infinite, and therefore He would rescue them, but their states being so opposite to Him, will not permit it to be done. Hell fire is wicked lusts; and it is everlasting, because it is the infixed character of the soul which cannot die. "Wickedness burneth as a fire;" (Isaiah ix. 18;) and the wicked burn with rage and hatred against all persons, and every thing, by which their desires and designs are opposed; and hence arises all their torment. For the lust of doing evil in those who are inflamed by it, leads them into acts of evil; and this being the case with every one in hell, it is easy to perceive that ferocity and outrage must be continually active, and thus that punishment must be perpetually present. Upon these wicked ones, there will "reign snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest," (Psalm xi. 6,) because by these things are denoted the sufferings which will arise from the practice of deceptive arts; from the indulgence of inflammatory lusts; from pursuing the lurid glare of false imaginations; and from the fierce impetuosity of their abandoned courses. This infernal kingdom is said to be "outer darkness," to denote the entire absence of all truth from the minds of its inhabitants; it is described as a scene of "weeping and gnashing of teeth," (Matt. viii. 12,) to express the anguish which results from the deprivation of every good, and the angry disputations which are consequent on the rejection of every truth. In short, hell is the opposite of heaven in all things. Hence heaven is said to be "everlasting life," and hell is asserted to be the "second death;" not that infernals die, but that in them hope, and joy, and truth, and every virtue have all expired. They live, but are dead to all the humanities of Heaven and the Church. This wicked state they have brought upon themselves by following out the devices and desires of their own evil hearts; and from this state result the horrid scenes and revolting objects by which they are surrounded.

On all these points, much might be said in the way of argument, illustration, and confirmation, but our limits forbid that we should enter upon them. Enough has been said to indicate a general idea on this subject, which every one who will venture to reflect upon it, will see to be grounded in reason, supported by philosophy, and attested by revelation. We therefore leave this rude outline of a painful condition to be filled up by the reflecting, under the sincerest hope that in the performance of this work they may be led to avoid every thing which can conduce to its formation in themselves.

Heaven and hell are the final states of which Revelation informs us. All its peculiarities of fact and structure — all the peculiarities of its teachings and encouragements, go to show us what are to be the everlasting abodes of the righteous, and the wicked; and at the same time to indicate those courses of life and action which lead to each. A Revelation which contemplates so high an end; which regards humanity with so extensive a love, cannot have been a fraudulent invention of men; it must be, as all the evidences adduced in this work tend to show, a wise and merciful provision of our Heavenly Father.

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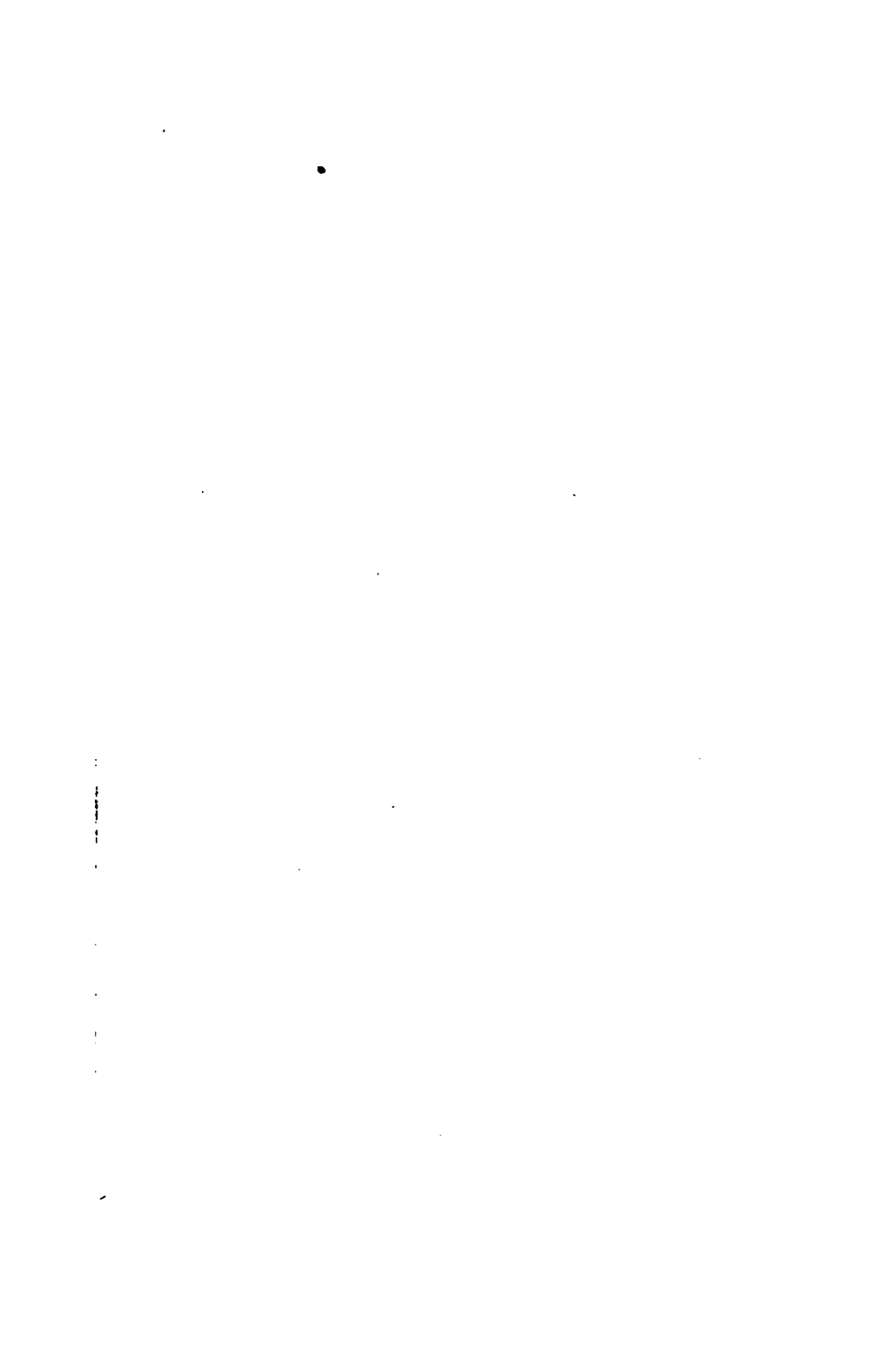
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